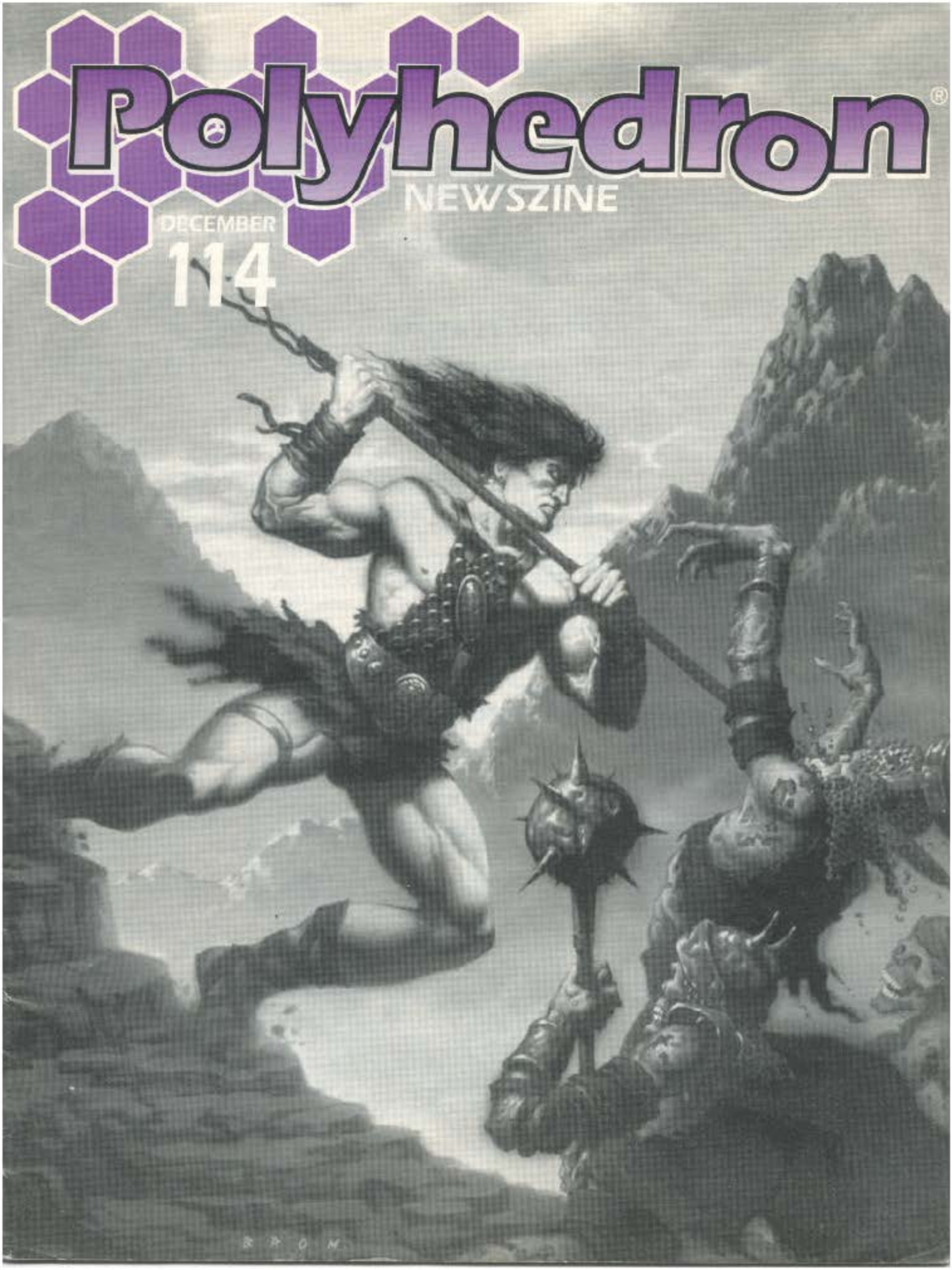
Polyhedron®

NEWSZINE

DECEMBER

114



Publisher
TSR, Inc.

Network Coordinator
Scott Douglas

Editor
Duane Maxwell

Guest Editor
Robert Wiese

Production Staff
Dave Conant
Shirley Surek
Terry Craig

Subscriptions
Judy Mueller

Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

Volume 15, Number 12
Issue #114

SPECIAL FEATURE

13 **WINTER FANTASY™ Convention Information**

FEATURES

3 **In Memorium**
The Network bids farewell to a renowned dwarven adventurer

4 **Death's Teeth — by Steve Miller**
An adventure location for the DRAGONLANCE® Campaign

26 **On Your Mark ...**
1996 Network Club Decathlon

EDITORIAL

9 **Notes From HQ**

DEPARTMENTS

10 **A World of Your Own — by Roger Moore**
Where were you when the lights went out?

19 **Ravens Bluff Trumpeter**

20 **Forgotten Deities — by Eric Boyd**
Ssethh/Vaerae, lord of the yuan–ti

21 **Jungle Tales—by Dr. M. Hilzenbauer**
Two stories for the (Malatran) campfire

22 **Larger Than Life — by Lawrence Hurley**
A pair of unlikely companions

24 **World Under Construction — by William w. Connors**
Early design information from DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE™

Cover by Brom

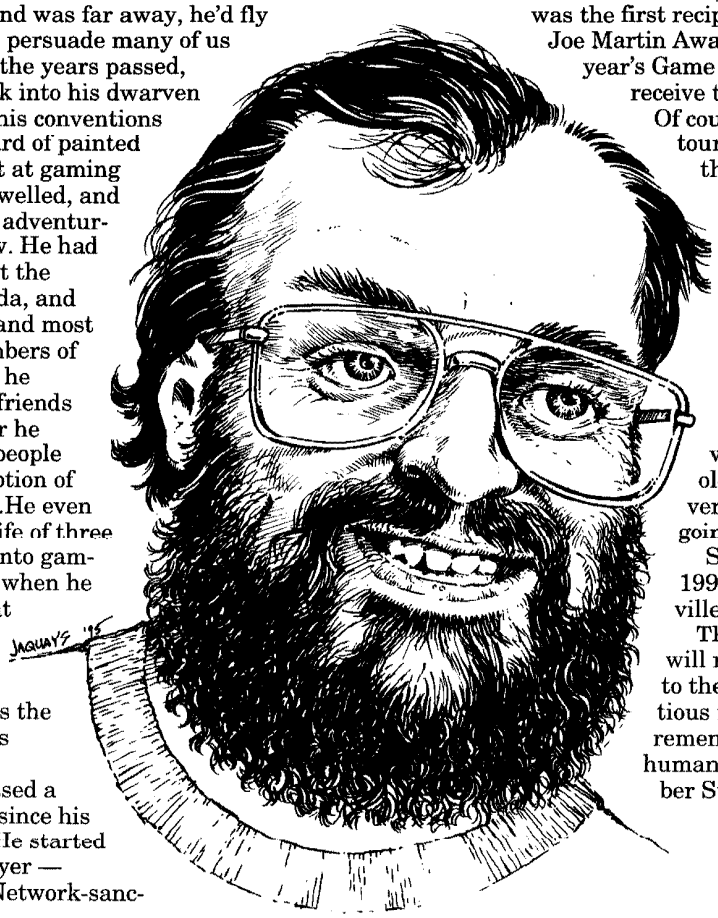
In Memorium

The Network bids farewell to a renowned dwarven adventurer

I met Steve Glimpse in October 1984, in Evansville, Indiana. It was my first gaming convention, and my first Network tournament. I sat across from him and his mound of colorful, worn-edged dice. He was playing a dwarf, and with his bushy black beard, crooked grin, and sparkling eyes, he very much looked the part. I don't remember the character I played, or the name of the adventure or the DM. But I'll always remember Steve.

Steve lured me, and many other players, into several Network games that long-ago fall weekend. And then he lured us into dozens upon dozens of games over convention weekends to come. Steve's love of the role-playing hobby was infectious. He had a way of tempting newcomers to a table and getting them wrapped up in the adventure. He had a way of making them mark their calendars for conventions he was planning to attend. If Steve was going, we were going. We had to. He had a way of making every game fun.

Fun was what gaming was all about to Steve. An engineer for McDonell-Douglas in St. Louis for many years, Steve put his work and worries aside when there was a convention within driving distance. And if the convention looked tempting and was far away, he'd fly there — and often persuade many of us to come along. As the years passed, hints of gray snuck into his dwarven beard. The list of his conventions increased, the hoard of painted dragons he bought at gaming charity auctions swelled, and the number of his adventuring comrades grew. He had friends throughout the Midwest, in Canada, and on both coasts — and most of them were members of the Network. And he had thousands of friends he didn't know, for he touched so many people through his promotion of the gaming hobby.He even lured Billie, his wife of three and a half years, into gaming, and he'd grin when he couldn't find her at a convention because she was in some cubbyhole that served as the gateway to Ravens Bluff.



Steve never missed a Game Fair — not since his first one in 1981. He started attending as a player — indulging in any Network-sanctioned game he could find. Then he was coaxed to be a judge. His dark eyes sparkled, like I remembered on that long-ago fall day, when he received his first perfect 180 judge score. He said he was afraid to judge any more because he knew he couldn't top that score. But he did judge — again and again — and on many occasions he matched that coveted 180.

I remember calling on him each year from 1987 to 1994, when I was working as the Network Coordinator and was looking for volunteers for the summer convention schedule. Just as Steve had coaxed me to the gaming table that fall in Evansville, I coaxed him to be a Regional Director for a while, and then to coordinate tournament after tournament at the Game Fair. Each year he said he'd had enough of coordinating — enough of all the paperwork and the checking on every judge and table. Each year he said he just wanted to play. And each year he'd sign up for a bigger tournament to shepherd, such as the massive Network feature. He took the next step earlier this year and signed on a convention staff — for SunQuest in Orlando. And I'm certain he would have done even more — if he'd been given the time.

Steve racked up a few service awards for all his efforts. He was the first recipient of Evansville Gaming Guild's prestigious Joe Martin Award for Outstanding Gaming, and at this year's Game Fair he was one of the first members to receive the Network's Lifetime Achievement Award. Of course, he also racked up more wins at Network tournaments than anyone could care to count and that few people could hope to equal.

He won that game in Evansville in 1984. There was no contest. Anytime Steve was given a dwarf to play, he'd always win. He'd triumph in battles against hill giants and ogres and wyverns, and he'd walk away with magazine subscriptions and other prizes.

But there was one battle he couldn't win. Steve Glimpse was diagnosed with skin cancer in 1990. He fought it on and off, and was at one time declared cancer-free. But his old foe came back to haunt him with a terrible vengence late this past spring. And it wasn't going to let Steve win.

Steve died early in the morning October 3, 1995, on a fall day a lot like that one in Evansville so many years ago.

The many people he touched over the years will remember what he brought to their lives and to the game table — fun, laughter, and an infectious fervor for the role-playing hobby. They'll remember a dwarven heart beating inside a human body, and they'll fondly and always remember Steve.

Jean

Death's Teeth

An adventure location in the DRAGONLANCE® setting

By Steve Miller

This material, based onthe module Dragons of Faith (DL 12) *by Harold Johnson and Bruce Heard, expands on a location at the western edge of the Blood Sea. It is featured as Encounter Area 41 in the original module, or Encounter Area 75 in DRAGONLANCE Classics 3 anthology. It is designed for characters of levels 8–10.*

A Tale of Two Brothers

When the pride of the Kingpriest called down the punishment of the gods on the people of Krynn, numbered among the many casualties were the twin brothers who commanded the Istari fortress of Ladeveth.

Ladeveth had been built across a valley that served as one of the main approaches to Istar. The twins commanded a legion of warriors and hundreds of inquisitors stationed here. Each was also the stern, loving father of a large family.

Delarin was a devout follower of the Kingpriest and a diligent inquisitor who ensured that his charges followed carefully the Kingpriest's doctrine of Manifest Virtue. His brother Mitarias, an accomplished fighter, was the commander of the Holy Legion stationed at Ladeveth, whose primary duties were to defend the approaches to Istar and hunt down the ogres plaguing the region.

When the Cataclysm struck, and the ocean rushed in to drown the shattered remains of an empire the gods themselves had destroyed, most of Ladeveth and its inhabitants were washed away by the immense tidal wave that tore through the valley.

Only the two endtowers of the fortress remained. The northern tower was where Delarin lived with his family, while Mitarias and his family made their home in the southern one. Each brother lost loved ones in the Cataclysm: Delarin lost his wife and only son, leaving him with four daughters, and Mitarias lost two daughters; only his wife, her elderly father, two sons, and a daughter survived.

The destruction wrought by the gods, and the loss of their families, drove both brothers mad. They blamed each other for what had befallen their families and grew to hate each other. As their insanity grew deeper, they came to believe that the only way to avenge the wrongful deaths of their loved ones was to destroy what the other brother loved most. History does not record who struck the first blow, but the results were the same: the two brothers murdered each other's remaining family members. Their spirits live on, feeding on the hate that consumed their corporeal selves.

The Brothers Today

The last towers of Ladeveth still stand, although the peoples of the Blood Sea refer to them as Death's Teeth. They are located on the eastern shore of the Blood Sea, where Waterspan gives way to the ocean. The southern tower is haunted by Mitarias, who is now a haunt, and the vengeful spirits of his brother's children, who have become wraiths. The north tower is haunted by Delarin, who is now a spectre, the undead spirits of Mitarias' children (which have risen as wraiths, just like their cousins), and the shambling remains of Delarian's wife and father-in-law, who have risen as ghasts.

Adventure Hooks

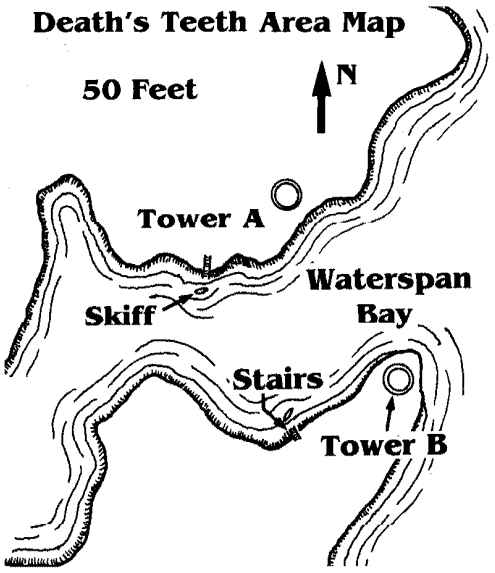
Death's Teeth is in a fairly isolated spot along the Blood Sea, so it is unlikely that the characters will just "happen" to be there in most campaigns. In DL 12 *Dragons of Faith,* where this site is first mentioned, the characters are lured here by a Dragonarmy officer upon whom they are spying. This method might work in some campaigns. Other reasons for the characters to be at Death's Teeth might be:

1. While traveling along the coast, a suddent storm forces them to make landfall at the inlet to Waterspan Bay. Upon being attacked by the ogres, one of the creatures lives long enough to inform the characters that the towers contain great treasures that are guarded by fearsome monsters.

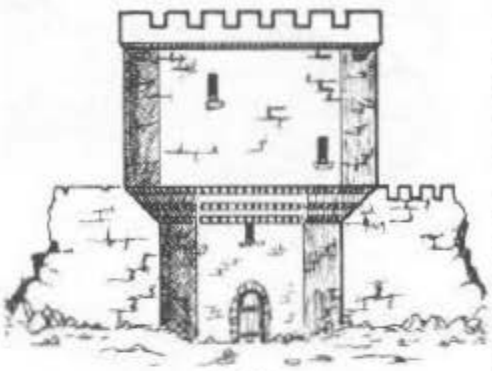
2. While searching for information on dragonlances, or other magical weapons with which to fight the armies of evil, the characters come across references to "the fabulous collection of exotic and magical arms of Mitarias, commander of Ladeveth's legions" in pre-Cataclysm texts. Additional research reveals that Ladeveth was the name of a fortress located near what is now Waterspan Bay, along the coast of the Blood Sea.

The Surrounding Area

Death's Teeth are perched atop windswept bluffs on land that is claimed by the barbaric ogre nation of Kernen. The ground is covered by a variety of grass with stiff blades that grow to about a foot in height. In the strong winds that blow across the bluffs, the grass is constantly waving to and fro, making it appear as though the towers are surrounded by a sea of their own. The blades are very sharp, and characters who try to move across the area have a 10% cumulative chance per turn to be cut upon their shins, suffering 1 hit point of damage.



Map illustrations by Dave Sutherland



Side View

The ogres use the promontories to keep watch over the bay and inlet, and there is a 20% chance that the characters will encounter an ogre patrol for every turn spent in the region illustrated on the "Death's Teeth Area Map". Once the encounter with the ogres has taken place, there won't be another ogre encounter until the next day. The patrols consist of six normal ogres and an ogre leader (who has received some training in martial com bat by a Dragonarmy officer stationed at Ogrebond to the south.)

Ogres (6): Int Low (8); AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SZ L; ML Steady (11-12); XP 975.

Ogre Leader: Int Average (10); AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 + 6 (bastard sword); SZ L; ML Elite (13-14); XP 1,775.

The ogres never go near the towers, as they know something terrible dwells within. An ogre taken alive will tell the characters of great treasures guarded by horrible guardians. They don't know the nature of these guardians, but know that something lives under the cemetary outside the tower on the northern shore.

At the base of the bluff (which can be reached by a rickety set of stairs constructed by the ogres), are two skiffs that the ogres use to cross Waterspan Bay on their patrols. Occasionally, an ogre patrol will bivouac at the base of these stairs rather than return to their camp, so if the characters were to destroy a patrol, they will not attract undue attention for a couple of days.

The Towers in Detail

As mentioned above, the two towers appear as blackened, weather-worn husks. The interiors of the towers are as ravaged by the salty air as the outsides.

The floorplans of both towers are the same, but the contents are different. The detail map provided can be used for both structures, with the contents and encounters in each tower being separated by the codes A and B, with A being Delarin's tower, and B being Mitarias' tower. Note that if there is no specific detail provided for a room beyond the boxed text, this means there is nothing else of note in that area.

Ground Level
1. Family Plot
Inside a small, wind-weathered wall is what appears to be a graveyard. You see several gravestones slanting at different angles, each at the end of a slight depression in the earth. This area is overgrown with the stiff grass like the rest of the region, but you can see that several areas have been dug up recently. The grave markers are so weathered that the names carved on them are impossible to read.

As Mitarias' wife and father-in-law lair here, living together in a twisted mockery of family existence. The disturbed areas lead to the warrens they have created.

If a character approaches one of these areas, a horrible, reeking, mud-caked nightmarish woman launches herself up through the loose dirt, and attempts to grab the character and drag him down into the hole.

Check for surprise on the part of the character. If the character is surprised, or if the ghast scores a successful hit, the character is yanked through the soft earth and down into the underground tunnels. The other characters hear a muffled screeching voice, "Daddy! Dinner's ready!" The second ghast arrives within 1d4 rounds, and, if the character was paralyzed, other characters trying to rescue him will be confronted by two horrid creatures feasting on their comrade. (The victim suffers1d6 points of damage per round.)

Ghasts (2): Int Very (11); AL CE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 23, 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 claws, 1d8 bite; SA Paralyzation; SD Stench; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 650

If the characters defeat the ghasts, and explore their warren, they find tunnels leading to five different chambers, each of which contains the remains of humans and other creatures devoured over the years. In each of these five areas, there are 1d4x100 steel pieces, but there are also bodies that weren't devoured to the point where they would not re-animate: Each room contains 1d6 ghasts who are unable to move around, due to missing limbs. They writhe among the other remains and attempt to bite or grab characters who enter the room, while groaning with terrible hunger.

These immobile ghasts should prove no threat to the characters, and should merely be used as a horrible, blood-chilling sight for them to witness. If the characters decide to get close to the pathetic undead creatures, the DM can consider them 2 HD monsters with an armor class of 8.

2. Inspection Area
As you try to open the door to the black tower, it falls apart, the iron bands that once held it together reduced to powdery rust. Beyond, is a room choked with dust-covered cobwebs. In one corner, you can see a circular flight of stairs that wind their way up to a faint light. Directly across from you, slivers of light drift in through a warped door, much like the one that just fell apart when you touched it.

A: There are no dangers to the characters in this room. The only notewor-

thy feature is the dead carcass of a giant spider on the floor. If a character examines the body, he can find no obvious cause for the creature's death. (The fact is that the monster simply died of old age.)

B: As the charactersenter this room, the dust falls from the cobwebs and fills the air. Allow an Alertness check for any character with that non-weapon proficiency. A successful check means the character notices a pair of glowing red eyes hovering in the dust-filled darkness. This is one of the undead spirits that dwell in the tower. It immediately attacks the character who spotted it. If no one has the Alertness proficiency, choose a character at random, and check for surprise as the wraith makes its move.

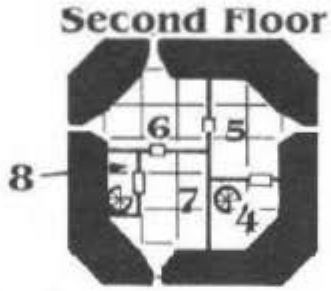
Wraith: Int Very (11); AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24; HD 5+3; hp 39; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML Champion (15); XP 2,000

There is also a trap door in one corner of the room. The stairwell beneath it, however, has long since collapsed. If the characters choose to excavate the area, they will create a shaft that leads to a small dungeon under the tower. The DM can expand this portion, if he chooses.

First Floor
3. Barracks
The stairwell opens into another cobwebbed room. An arrow slit allows light to spill through the dusty air, revealing the decayed, collapsed remains of beds and chairs that have been rotted by centuries of salty moisture blown in off the sea. Set back into the left wall, you can see an iron door that is streaked with red. The stairs continue up into darkness.

This room is empty of monsters in both towers. However, in the crumbled remains of the beds, and footlockers that once stood at their ends, searching characters will find 1d8 gp. These are coins of Istarian mint, and are exceedingly rare in post Cataclysmic Krynn. Collectors will pay 200 st per coin.

The door leads out onto a fragment of the wall. It is rusted shut in both towers, but a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll will force either door open by breaking it off its hinges.



Second Floor
4. Guard Post
The stairs end in a room that is as dusty and desolate as any other you've seen in this place. A wooden door sags on loose hinges on one wall, and beyond it you can see daylight (assuming the characters are in the tower during the day). A long-extinguished torch rests in a rusty sconce on your right.

A: If the characters examine the floor, they will not find any tracks in the dust, but they will notice a dark stain on the stone floor. If they examine it more closely, they will recognize it as an ancient blood stain. If a character examines the stain this closely, the angry spirit of Dolar, the eldest son of Mitarias, reaches up through the floor, grabs the character around the neck, and starts bashing the character's head against the floor (1d6 points of damage per round and the loss of 1 point of strength). Dolar was slain in such a way by his uncle, and to feed his rage, he slays others in the same way so that he keeps fresh his eternal hatred of Delarin. A successful Strength check by the victim will allow him to break free from the spirit's grasp, at which time Dolar emerges completely from the stain, and attacks with his full power, howling with fury.

Shadow: Int Low (7); AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML Champion (15); XP 2,000

B: There is no danger in this room, but the torch in the sconce is magical. It is a *torch of everburning*, and once lit it cannot be extinguished for 24 hours, save by the person who lit it.

5. Waiting Room
Sunlight spills through the arrow slit, casting a bright wedge of light into the darkened room. In the corners of this room, there are partially collapsed, moldy easy chairs. A pair of crossed swords gleam in the sunlight, mounted in a cross above the door, directly opposite the arrow slit.

In both towers, the swords above the doors were gifts from high-ranking military officials. Each is a *long sword*+1.

A and B: As the characters enter the room, they can see that there are no cobwebs in the chamber. Once they are in the room, three easy chairs scurry towards them, animated by some unseen force. Two rounds later, the swords above the door come flying at them.

Animated Furniture (3): Int (0); AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 8; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1; SA & SD Nil; SZ M; ML Fanatic (20); XP 35

Animated Swords (2): Int Very (0); AL N; AC 5; MV Fl 12; HD 4+4; hp 20; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+1; SA & SD Nil; SZ M; ML Fanatic (20); XP 175

The furniture is reduced to kindling when the heroes inflict enough damage to destroy it, but the swords merely fall to the ground after taking 20 hit points. The characters may now claim these with no further risk.

6. Conference Chamber
A large table, stained from many decades of salty air dominates this room. Six unsturdy-looking chairs stand around it. Banners, too moldy for anyone to read the heraldry that once adorned them, hang on the walls. A rotting door sags on its hinges, leading from the room.

A: As the first character reaches the door leaving the room, the banners hanging on either side of it animate, and attempt to grab him, as though affected by the 2nd-level wizard spell *bind*. The banners are AC 8, and must be slashed for 10 hit points before they are too damaged to bind characters.

B: The mummified remains of a woman lie on the table, her body dressed in the frayed remnants of a gown. Around her neck lies a platinum choker with a ruby. It is worth 2,000 st.

These are the remains of Nahla, Delarin's oldest daughter, and they lay as they have since Mitarias brutally slew the young woman. If a character disturbs the body in any way, Nahla's angry spirit swoops down from the ceiling to attack. She will tolerate no further violation of her person.

Wraith: Int Very (11); AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24; HD 5+3; hp 39; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML Champion (15); XP 2,000

7. Commander's Office

The smell of decay is strong in this room. Light spills from an arrow slit across a water-stained desk that stands before it. Rotting tapestries adorn the walls. This room was once a luxurious office, but it is now just a salt-stained ruin.

A: When Delarin surrendered his last shred of sanity to hatred and paranoid fear of his brother (which occurred shortly after he slew Mitarias' last child), he came to this room to write the "true account" of what happened in the towers. After a week of writing without food, drink, or sleep, he expired where he sat. It is this spirit that has been animating the furniture to attack the characters. If the characters are not possessed by the spirit of Mitarias, as they enter Delarin's office, he senses, in a moment of lucidty, that they are not agents of his brother. Realizing this, he swiftly slips behind one of the rotting tapestries, hiding his horrible visage from the characters.

He addresses the characters in archaic common: "Hail, ye agents of righteousness. I have awaited your coming since the day glorious Istar perished. I beseech thee to assist me in visiting vengence upon the blackguard—him whom I once called brother—that destroyed my family and whose evil was part of the infection that brought low the righteous realm of Istar. If thou slay him, then I and the other restless spirits in this tower may rest. Ye will find him in the tower across the pass. If one of your number will permit me to make use thine arm as mine in righteous vengence, my gratitude will know no bounds."

Delarin wishes to possess a hero, causing that character's spirit to go dormant until Mitarias has been destroyed. He offers to answer whatever questions the characters might have about Istar in return for their help, as well as stating that he will ask Paladine to watch over them in their quest. Should the characters refuse him, or turn belligerent at any time, Delarin emerges from behind the tapestry, madness consuming him again, and attempts to *magic jar* the toughest-looking fighter present. Delarin then uses his new body to escape the tower and cross the bay in one of the skiffs. (If Delarin is forced to hijack a character's body using his *magic jar* ability, the character's spirit is irrevocably destroyed. DMs might wish to allow the other characters to give chase by, coincidentally, having both skiffs on the same side of the bay.) The body in the chair has nothing of value on it, and the hundreds of pages that Delarin wrote in his final days have long since turned to rotted pulp. In the drawer of the desk, however, are clerical scrolls containing *detect evil, enthrall, know alignment, negative plane protection, detect lie, divination,* and *restoration* spells. All function at 8th level.

Ghost: INT: Very (11); AL LE; AC 0/8; MV 9; HD 10; hp 64; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Age 10-40 years; SA magic jar, fear; SD Ethereal, silver or magical weapons to hit; SZ M; ML Champion (15); XP 7,000.

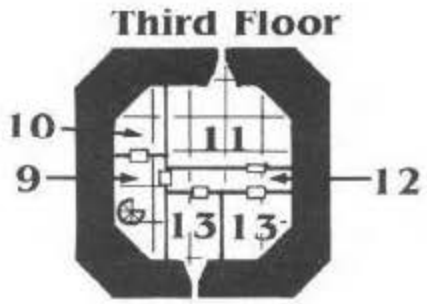
8. Stairwell.

In both towers, the door to the stairs are locked, and the mechanism is rusted in place. A successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates, or a *knock* spell will open them. The stairs go up.

Third Floor

9. Entrance Hall

Two doors lead from this windowless chamber. Additionally, a trap door leads up.



B: Behind the door to Area 10, the characters can hear the faint sound of sobbing. The door to Area 10 is locked, but may be opened with a knock spell or a thief's Open Locks ability, and the trap door can be forced open with a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll.

10. Cell

Dust covers the floor in this barren stone room. Along one wall are rusty chains and manacles.

B: A beautiful girl in her late teens in a tattered dress and with a bruised face is chained to the wall. This is the spirit of Lorela, another of Delarin's daughters. She was chained here by Mitarias and left to die.

When the first character enters the room, the door slams behind him. It cannot be opened or battered down by any means. The chained woman pleads with him just to sit and talk with her for a while. If the character does so, the tragic spirit will ask him about the sunlight, the weather, and his loved ones. If he is soothing and polite, the tragic spirit fades away and the door opens. If the character is rude or seems to be fearful, Lorela will become angry and attack. (She is not actually chained to the wall, as she is noncorporeal.)

Like her father, Lorela has the ability to animate objects, and she will attempt to trap the character in the manacles.

Wraith: Int Very (11); AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24; HD 5+3; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML Champion (15); XP 2,000

Animated Manacles (3): Int Non (0); AL N; AC 0; MV 0; HD 5; hp 20; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA On a To-Hit roll of 20, chains victim to wall; SD Nil; SZ M; ML Fanatic (20); XP 420

Lorela's skeleton lies on the floor, and it has a silver anklet worth 100 st.

11. Hallway
Beyond the door is a dusty hallway with two doors on your right and one door on your left.

12. Master Bedchamber
The dominant feature of this room is a large canopied bed that has long since fallen to ruin. Other furniture includes a collapsed dressing table, a chair, and a wardrobe from which the door has fallen, revealing moldy, rotting garments. Light enters the room through an arrow slit.

B: A skeleton lies in the bed, an empty carafe and goblet near his limp hand. Near the ceiling, 12 feet off the floor, hovers the ghostly image of Mitarias. He died contemplating how best to kill his brother's last two daughters. Since his revenge was not complete, his spirit lingers here as a haunt, waiting for the means to end it all.

As the characters enter the room, the spectral form says, "Ah, mighty servants of light! How long I have waited, and prayed for your arrival! I beseech you—help me exstingush a blight of monstrous evil from the tower that stands across the pass."

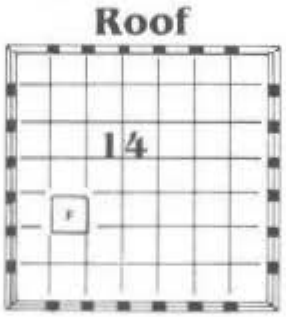
He reviles Delarin as a monster whose thirst for the blood of innocents was not sated by the destruction that he and his kind (Istari priests) brought down upon fair Istar. Delarin would not rest until he had foully murdered Mitarias' wife and children. The haunt will request that a character allow him to make use of his body to avenge his slain family, so that his soul can finally rest. In return, he will answer any questions they might have about ancient Istar, and will reveal that his fabulous collection of weapons in located in the dungeon under the tower. (It has long since collapsed, but Mitarias does not realize this.)

Haunt: INT: Very (12); AL LE; AC as per victim; MV as per victim; HD 5; hp as per victim; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg as per weapon; SA possession; SD cannot be harmed unless possessing a body; SZ M; ML Fanatic (15); XP 2,000.

If no character volunteers, Mitarias tries to possess one anyway, and heads for the tower across the bay. Likewise, if the heroes arrive with Delarin possessing one of their number, Mitarias doesn't even bother conversing, but merely possesses a body, and proceeds to fight his brother to the death. "Concluding the Adventure" explains what happens once the two brother face each other.

In one corner of the room is a crumbled chest with 500 st of Istarian mint. The characters may take this once the spirit of Mitarias has been dealt with, but the coins are cursed. Any character who takes the money will find himself unable to speak plainly, and will suffer -2 to all reaction rolls.

13. Guest Rooms
These are the chambers in which the children of both brothers lived out their final months. In each tower, the characters experience an odd sense of dread when entering. The rooms contain nothing of value, and all furniture and clothing is decayed beyond usefulness.



Roof Top
14. Roof Walk
The salty wind is strong here atop the tower, and you can see for miles around. To the south, you can just make out the squat fortress of Ogrebond, and to the east, over the sea, you can see the flashes of lightning from the storm that hangs over the vast whirlpool at the heart of the Blood Sea.

B: In a corner of the roof lies a weather worn skeleton that clutches the rusty remains of a dagger in one hand. This is the body of Emma, the youngest of Delarin's daughters. A precocious youngster, she had overheard enough conversations among upward-mobile officers that she had learned to mix lethal poisons by the age of 12. She mixed such a concoction for her uncle, and, upon discovering she could not escape through the locked door from Area 8, and that her sister had stopped sobbing in Area 10, she came up here and died.

When characters approach the body, they hear a faint whisper above the wind: The voice of a young girl pitifully complaining about how cold it is, and begging them to help her stay warm. If the heroes cover the skeleton with a blanket or cloak, the voice sighs contentedly and fades away with a "Thank you." If the characters do nothing, and attempt to leave the roof, Emma's angry spirit materializes and attacks.

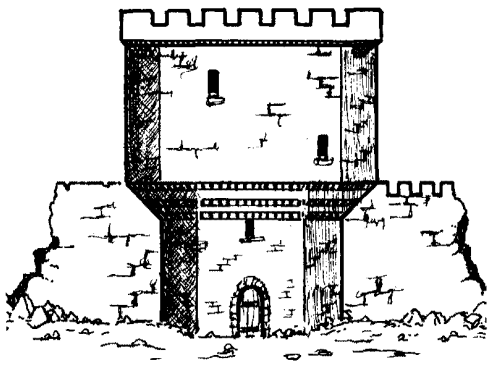
Wraith: Int Very (11); AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24; HD 5+3; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML Champion (15); XP 2,000.

Concluding the Adventure

When the two evil spirits confront each other in the bodies of characters, they fight each with whatever weapons are available until one character goes below 0 hit points. When this happens, both spirits cease to exist in bright flashes of light. The remaining spirits of the children are finally at peace, and the two ghasts die as well.

The characters can now excavate the collapsed dungeon under Tower B, and retrieve whatever weapons or spcial artifact the DM chooses to place there, or perhaps discover that nothing survived.

No matter how the scenario plays out, the characters will not likely discover the truth of what happened here at Ladeveth those many centuries ago, for even the spirits of Delarin and Mitarias have forgotten how those events were brought on. ❑



Side View

The ogres use the promontories to keep watch over the bay and inlet, and there is a 20% chance that the characters will encounter an ogre patrol for every turn spent in the region illustrated on the "Death's Teeth Area Map". Once the encounter with the ogres has taken place, there won't be another ogre encounter until the next day. The patrols consist of six normal ogres and an ogre leader (who has received some training in martial combat by a Dragonarmy officer stationed at Ogrebond to the south.)

Ogres (6): Int Low (8); AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SZ L; ML Steady (11-12); XP 975.

Ogre Leader: Int Average (10); AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 + 6 (bastard sword); SZ L; ML Elite (13-14); XP 3,176.

The ogres never go near the towers, as they know something terrible dwells within. An ogre taken alive will tell the characters of great treasures guarded by horrible guardians. They don't know the nature of these guardians, but know that something lives under the cemetary outside the tower on the northern shore.

At the base of the bluff (which can be reached by a rickety set of stairs constructed by the ogres), are two skiffs that the ogres use to cross Waterspan Bay on their patrols. Occasionally, an ogre patrol will bivouac at the base of these stairs rather than return to their camp, so if the characters were to destroy a patrol, they will not attract undue attention for a couple of days.

The Towers in Detail

As mentioned above, the two towers appear as blackened, weather-worn husks. The interiors of the towers are as ravaged by the salty air as the outsides.

The floorplans of both towers are the same, but the contents are different. The detail map provided can be used for both structures, with the contents and encounters in each tower being separated by the codes A and B, with A being Delarin's tower, and B being Mitarias' tower. Note that if there is no specific detail provided for a room beyond the boxed text, this means there is nothing else of note in that area.

Ground Level

1. Family Plot

Inside a small, wind-weathered wall is what appears to be a graveyard. You see several gravestones slanting at different angles, each at the end of a slight depression in the earth. This area is overgrown with the stiff grass like the rest of the region, but you can see that several areas have been dug up recently. The grave markers are so weathered that the names carved on them are impossible to read.

A: Mitarias' wife and father-in-law lair here, living together in a twisted mockery of family existence. The disturbed areas lead to the warrens they have created.

If a character approaches one of these areas, a horrible, reeking, mud-caked nightmarish woman launches herself up through the loose dirt, and attempts to grab the character and drag him down into the hole.

Check for surprise on the part of the character. If the character is surprised, or if the ghast scores a successful hit, the character is yanked through the soft earth and down into the underground tunnels. The other characters hear a muffled screeching voice, "Daddy! Dinner's ready!" The second ghast arrives within 1d4 rounds, and, if the character was paralyzed, other characters trying to rescue him will be confronted by two horrid creatures feasting on their comrade. (The victim suffers1d6 points of damage per round.)

Ghasts (2): Int Very (11-12); AL CE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 28, 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4; SA Paralyzation; SD Special; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 650.

If the characters defeat the ghasts, and explore their warren, they find tunnels leading to five different chambers, each of which contains the remains of humans and other creatures devoured over the years. In each of these five areas, there are 1d4x100 steel pieces, but there are also bodies that weren't devoured to the point where they would not re-animate: Each room contains 1d6 ghasts who are unable to move around, due to missing limbs. They writhe among the other remains and attempt to bite or grab characters who enter the room, while groaning with terrible hunger.

These immobile ghasts should prove no threat to the characters, and should merely be used as a horrible, blood-chilling sight for them to witness. If the characters decide to get close to the pathetic undead creatures, the DM can consider them 2 HD monsters with an armor class of 8.

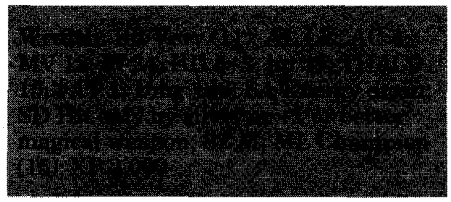
2. Inspection Area

As you try to open the door to the black tower, it falls apart, the iron bands that once held it together reduced to powdery rust. Beyond, is a room choked with dust-covered cobwebs. In one corner, you can see a circular flight of stairs that wind their way up to a faint light. Directly across from you, slivers of light drift in through a warped door, much like the one that just fell apart when you touched it.

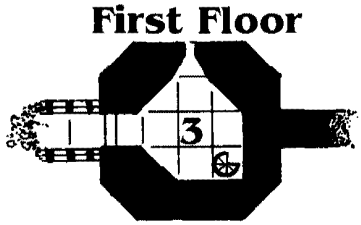
A: There are no dangers to the characters in this room. The only notewor-

thy feature is the dead carcass of a giant spider on the floor. If a character examines the body, he can find no obvious cause for the creature's death. (The fact is that the monster simply died of old age.)

B: As the charactersenter this room, the dust falls from the cobwebs and fills the air. Allow an Alertness check for any character with that non-weapon proficiency. A successful check means the character notices a pair of glowing red eyes hovering in the dust-filled darkness. This is one of the undead spirits that dwell in the tower. It immediately attacks the character who spotted it. If no one has the Alertness proficiency, choose a character at random, and check for surprise as the wraith makes its move.



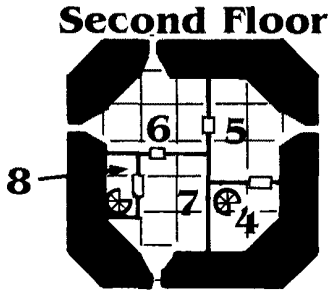
There is also a trap door in one corner of the room. The stairwell beneath it, however, has long since collapsed. If the characters choose to excavate the area, they will create a shaft that leads to a small dungeon under the tower. The DM can expand this portion, if he chooses.



First Floor
3. Barracks
The stairwell opens into another cobwebbed room. An arrow slit allows light to spill through the dusty air, revealing the decayed, collapsed remains of beds and chairs that have been rotted by centuries of salty moisture blown in off the sea. Set back into the left wall, you can see an iron door that is streaked with red. The stairs continue up into darkness.

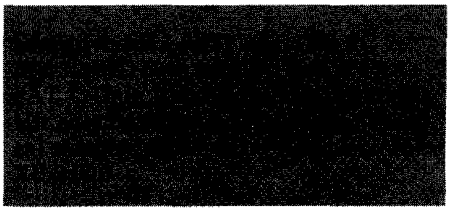
This room is empty of monsters in both towers. However, in the crumbled remains of the beds, and footlockers that once stood at their ends, searching characters will find 1d8 gp. These are coins of Istarian mint, and are exceedingly rare in post-Cataclysmic Krynn. Collectors wll pay 200 st per coin.

The door leads out onto a fragment of the wall. It is rusted shut in both towers, but a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll will force either door open by breaking it off its hinges.



Second Floor
4. Guard Post
The stairs end in a room that is as dusty and desolate as any other you've seen in this place. A wooden door sags on loose hinges on one wall, and beyond it you can see daylight (assuming the characters are in the tower during the day). A long-extinguished torch rests in a rusty sconce on your right.

A: If the characters examine the floor, they will not find any tracks in the dust, but they will notice a dark stain on the stone floor. If they examine it more closely, they will recognize it as an ancient blood stain. If a character examines the stain this closely, the angry spirit of Dolar, the eldest son of Mitarias, reaches up through the floor, grabs the character around the neck, and starts bashing the character's head against the floor (1d6 points of damage per round and the loss of 1 point of strength). Dolar was slain in such a way by his uncle, and to feed his rage, he slays others in the same way so that he keeps fresh his eternal hatred of Delarin. A successful Strength check by the victim will allow him to break free from the spirit's grasp, at which time Dolar emerges completely from the stain, and attacks with his full power, howling with fury.

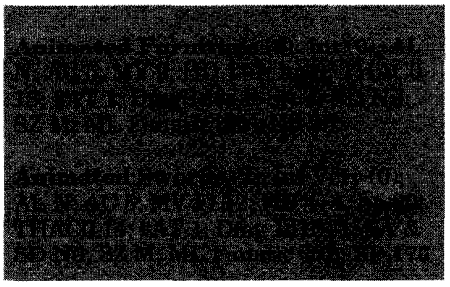


B: There is no danger in this room, but the torch in the sconce is magical. It is a *torch of everburning*, and once lit it cannot be extinguished for 24 hours, save by the person who lit it.

5. Waiting Room
Sunlight spills through the arrow slit, casting a bright wedge of light into the darkened room. In the corners of this room, there are partially collapsed, moldy easy chairs. A pair of crossed swords gleam in the sunlight, mounted in a cross above the door, directly opposite the arrow slit.

In both towers, the swords above the doors were gifts from high-ranking military officials. Each is a *long sword*+1.

A and B: As the characters enter the room, they can see that there are no cobwebs in the chamber. Once they are in the room, three easy chairs scurry towards them, animated by some unseen force. Two rounds later, the swords above the door come flying at them.



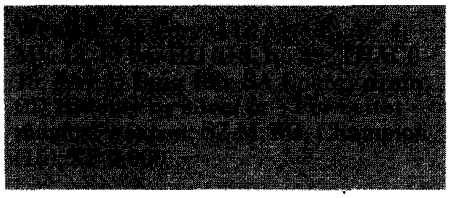
The furniture is reduced to kindling when the heroes inflict enough damage to destroy it, but the swords merely fall to the ground after taking 20 hit points. The characters may now claim these with no further risk.

6. Conference Chamber
A large table, stained from many decades of salty air dominates this room. Six unsturdy-looking chairs stand around it. Banners, too moldy for anyone to read the heraldry that once adorned them, hang on the walls. A rotting door sags on its hinges, leading from the room.

A: As the first character reaches the door leaving the room, the banners hanging on either side of it animate, and attempt to grab him, as though affected by the 2nd-level wizard spell *bind*. The banners are AC 8, and must be slashed for 10 hit points before they are too damaged to bind characters.

B: The mummified remains of a woman lie on the table, her body dressed in the frayed remnants of a gown. Around her neck lies a platinum choker with a ruby. It is worth 2,000 st.

These are the remains of Nahla, Delarin's oldest daughter, and they lay as they have since Mitarias brutally slew the young woman. If a character disturbs the body in any way, Nahla's angry spirit swoops down from the ceiling to attack: She will tolerate no further violation of her person.



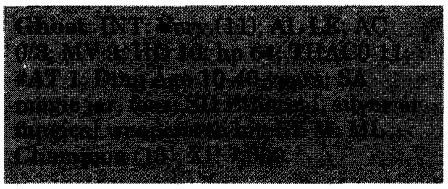
7. Commander's Office

The smell of decay is strong in this room. Light spills from an arrow slit across a water-stained desk that stands before it. Rotting tapestries adorn the walls. This room was once a luxurious office, but it is now just a salt-stained ruin.

A: When Delarin surrendered his last shred of sanity to hatred and paranoid fear of his brother (which occurred shortly after he slew Mitarias' last child), he came to this room to write the "true account" of what happened in the towers. After a week of writing without food, drink, or sleep, he expired where he sat. It is this spirit that has been animating the furniture to attack the characters. If the characters are not possessed by the spirit of Mitarias, as they enter Delarin's office, he senses, in a moment of lucidty, that they are not agents of his brother. Realizing this, he swiftly slips behind one of the rotting tapestries, hiding his horrible visage from the characters.

He addresses the characters in archaic common: "Hail, ye agents of righteousness. I have awaited your coming since the day glorious Istar perished. I beseech thee to assist me in visiting vengence upon the blackguard—him whom I once called brother—that destroyed my family and whose evil was part of the infection that brought low the righteous realm of Istar. If thou slay him, then I and the other restless spirits in this tower may rest. Ye will find him in the tower across the pass. If one of your number will permit me to make use thine arm as mine in righteous vengence, my gratitude will know no bounds."

Delarin wishes to possess a hero, causing that character's spirit to go dormant until Mitarias has been destroyed. He offers to answer whatever questions the characters might have about Istar in return for their help, as well as stating that he will ask Paladine to watch over them in their quest. Should the characters refuse him, or turn belligerent at any time, Delarin emerges from behind the tapestry, madness consuming him again, and attempts to *magic jar* the toughest-looking fighter present. Delarin then uses his new body to escape the tower and cross the bay in one of the skiffs. (If Delarin is forced to hijack a character's body using his *magic jar* ability, the character's spirit is irrevocably destroyed. DMs might wish to allow the other characters to give chase by, coincidentally, having both skiffs on the same side of the bay.) The body in the chair has nothing of value on it, and the hundreds of pages that Delarin wrote in his final days have long since turned to rotted pulp. In the drawer of the desk, however, are clerical scrolls containing *detect evil, enthrall, know alignment, negative plane protection, detect lie, divination,* and *restoration* spells. All function at 8th level.



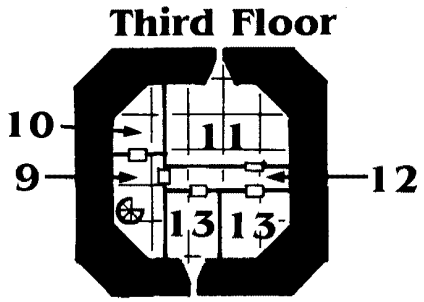
8. Stairwell.

In both towers, the door to the stairs are locked, and the mechanism is rusted in place. A successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates, or a *knock* spell will open them. The stairs go up.

Third Floor

9. Entrance Hall

Two doors lead from this windowless chamber. Additionally, a trap door leads up.



B: Behind the door to Area 10, the characters can hear the faint sound of sobbing. The door to Area 10 is locked, but may be opened with a knock spell or a thief's Open Locks ability, and the trap door can be forced open with a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll.

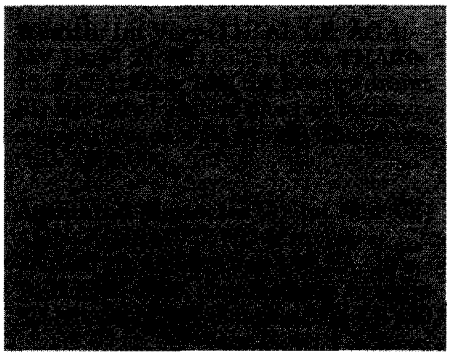
10. Cell

Dust covers the floor in this barren stone room. Along one wall are rusty chains and manacles.

B: A beautiful girl in her late teens in a tattered dress and with a bruised face is chained to the wall. This is the spirit of Lorela, another of Delarin's daughters. She was chained here by Mitarias and left to die.

When the first character enters the room, the door slams behind him. It cannot be opened or battered down by any means. The chained woman pleads with him just to sit and talk with her for a while. If the character does so, the tragic spirit will ask him about the sunlight, the weather, and his loved ones. If he is soothing and polite, the tragic spirit fades away and the door opens. If the character is rude or seems to be fearful, Lorela will become angry and attack. (She is not actually chained to the wall, as she is noncorporeal.)

Like her father, Lorela has the ability to animate objects, and she will attempt to trap the character in the manacles.



Lorela's skeleton lies on the floor, and it has a silver anklet worth 100 st.

11. Hallway
Beyond the door is a dusty hallway with two doors on your right and one door on your left.

12. Master Bedchamber
The dominant feature of this room is a large canopied bed that has long since fallen to ruin. Other furniture includes a collapsed dressing table, a chair, and a wardrobe from which the door has fallen, revealing moldy, rotting garments. Light enters the room through an arrow slit.

B: A skeleton lies in the bed, an empty carafe and goblet near his limp hand. Near the ceiling, 12 feet off the floor, hovers the ghostly image of Mitarias. He died contemplating how best to kill his brother's last two daughters. Since his revenge was not complete, his spirit lingers here as a haunt, waiting for the means to end it all.

As the characters enter the room, the spectral form says, "Ah, mighty servants of light! How long I have waited, and prayed for your arrival! I beseech you—help me exstingush a blight of monstrous evil from the tower that stands across the pass."

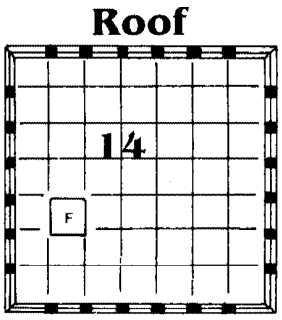
He reviles Delarin as a monster whose thirst for the blood of innocents was not sated by the destruction that he and his kind (Istari priests) brought down upon fair Istar. Delarin would not rest until he had foully murdered Mitarias' wife and children. The haunt will request that a character allow him to make use of his body to avenge his slain family, so that his soul can finally rest. In return, he will answer any questions they might have about ancient Istar, and will reveal that his fabulous collection of weapons in located in the dungeon under the tower. (It has long since collapsed, but Mitarias does not realize this.)

Haunt: INT: Very (12); AL: Lg; AC as per victim; MV as per victim; HD 3; hp as per victim; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg as per weapon; SA possession; SD cannot be harmed unless possessing a body; MR: M; MA: Fanatic (18); XP 2,000.

If no character volunteers, Mitarias tries to possess one anyway, and heads for the tower across the bay. Likewise, if the heroes arrive with Delarin possessing one of their number, Mitarias doesn't even bother conversing, but merely possesses a body, and proceeds to fight his brother to the death. "Concluding the Adventure" explains what happens once the two brother face each other.

In one corner of the room is a crumbled chest with 500 st of Istarian mint. The characters may take this once the spirit of Mitarias has been dealt with, but the coins are cursed. Any character who takes the money will find himself unable to speak plainly, and will suffer -2 to all reaction rolls.

13. Guest Rooms
These are the chambers in which the children of both brothers lived out their final months. In each tower, the characters experience an odd sense of dread when entering. The rooms contain nothing of value, and all furniture and clothing is decayed beyond usefulness.



Roof Top
14. Roof Walk
The salty wind is strong here atop the tower, and you can see for miles around. To the south, you can just make out the squat fortress of Ogrebond, and to the east, over the sea, you can see the flashes of lightning from the storm that hangs over the vast whirlpool at the heart of the Blood Sea.

B: In a corner of the roof lies a weather-worn skeleton that clutches the rusty remains of a dagger in one hand. This is the body of Emma, the youngest of Delarin's daughters. A precocious youngster, she had overheard enough conversations among upward-mobile officers that she had learned to mix lethal poisons by the age of 12. She mixed such a concoction for her uncle, and, upon discovering she could not escape through the locked door from Area 8, and that her sister had stopped sobbing in Area 10, she came up here and died.

When characters approach the body, they hear a faint whisper above the wind: The voice of a young girl pitifully complaining about how cold it is, and begging them to help her stay warm. If the heroes cover the skeleton with a blanket or cloak, the voice sighs contentedly and fades away with a "Thank you." If the characters do nothing, and attempt to leave the roof, Emma's angry spirit materializes and attacks.

Wraith: INT: Very (12); AL: LE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 5+3; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA drains 2 levels; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; MR: Champion (15); XP 7,000.

Concluding the Adventure

When the two evil spirits confront each other in the bodies of characters, they fight each with whatever weapons are available until one character goes below 0 hit points. When this happens, both spirits cease to exist in bright flashes of light. The remaining spirits of the children are finally at peace, and the two ghasts die as well.

The characters can now excavate the collapsed dungeon under Tower B, and retrieve whatever weapons or spcial artifact the DM chooses to place there, or perhaps discover that nothing survived.

No matter how the scenario plays out, the characters will not likely discover the truth of what happened here at Ladeveth those many centuries ago, for even the spirits of Delarin and Mitarias have forgotten how those events were brought on. ❑

Notes from HQ

A look at 1995, and a look ahead...

I'd like to say a few things about 1995, and maybe wax a little philosophical about 1996.

We at Network HQ want to say thank you to all those individuals who have supported the Network through this last year. Judges, players, coordinators, volunteers, and authors, I'd like to thank each of you for laying your limitless creative talents on the line for the benefit of your fellow Network members.

We'd also like to thank those folks who've openly disagreed with us this last year. Without your insightful feedback, we'd still be doing some things wrong. There is a difference, however, between being responsive (listening to members who offer constructive criticism), and being reactionary (coddling a few individuals who demand their own way). We will continue to be responsive to members' voices, and continue to act in the interest of Network members, all Network members.

What's important here is not that we agree on everything. It's become readily apparent to me, Duane, and Robert during this, our first year, that we're not going to satisfy everyone. We try to go carefully into our decision making processes, but there are often hard calls to make, calls with which many may disagree. Often we don't agree amongst ourselves on some of these decisions.

What's important here is that all of us work together to make this a better Network, a better and more fun organization. We should work together to make the LIVING CITY™ campaign the best possible campaign setting, with the best possible adventures. We should work together to provide other Living settings, other tournaments, and other Network activities with that same level of enthusiasm which epitomizes the LIVING CITY campaign.

What's important is that we all understand that we do disagree on some issues, and this is not necessarily a bad thing...

Due to circumstances beyond our control, Navarre the Magic Trader will not be appearing at Constitution (Jan, MD). Look for an updated schedule in the next issue.

LIVING CITY News

Next month we'll begin sequencing out two sets of articles especially for the Living City enthusiast: Orders of Knighthood and Temples of Ravens Bluff. These articles are the first in a series of articles which more fully describe the city environs, while developing the continuing story of Ravens Bluff.

A note about magic item certificates: Every LC player has the right to obtain certificates from their judge for magic items obtained during play. Network HQ has made certain that any tournaments sent out from this point forward will have magic item certificates inserted into the adventures. Convention tournament coordinators are therefore responsible for making adequate numbers of copies of certificates to be awarded by judges at each table. Judges are responsible for obtaining the necessary certificates prior to play. Players are responsible for asking for the certificates at the table.

Many members have asked about what kind of certificates will be valid, since conventions have issued various kinds. And there are trading forms out there. The answer is simple: only official forms with the Raven logo will be valid (a trademark of TSR, using it without permission is a no-no). Players with other types of certificates must exchange them for correct ones or trade or use up the items.

Remember, magic item certificates will not be required until the GEN CON® 1996 Game Fair. We recommend that those individuals who wish to get certificates for their items before the Game Fair send a copy of their character, history, and items requested as soon as possible. Don't get caught in the summer rush!

Slot Zeros

A word about Slot zeros, those strange beasts peculiar to Living setting tournaments and especially LIVING CITY games. A slot zero occurs when the con coordinator gets the event judges together so they can play the event before they have to judge the event, allowing them to play their characters and gain experience and magic items. This can be a good idea, and tends to attract much needed judges to LC events. However, one cannot just run a slot zero if one so desires. Here are some guidelines for slot zero events:

- Slot zeros are a privilege, not a right, extended to convention coordinators by HQ. They must be requested in writing along with the Tournament Request Form. The number of requested slot zero tables and their intended location must be included in the request.
- Slot zeros are for judges only. They are not intended to be, and should never be used as an excuse for friends of the con coordinator to play extra events. They should not be used so that judges can play LC (or whatever) and then judge the Feature, nor should they be used for convention volunteers' benefit. All these people can make time to play the event at the convention if they so desire.
- Slot zero packets must be clearly labelled "Slot 0," and must include the date the slot zero was played. They must be returned to HQ along with the packets for the convention.

We think that slot zeros are a good idea; we'd like to keep offering them. Those conventions abusing them risk losing the privilege. One last tip to convention coordinators: we suggest you hold the magic items from slot zeros until the con, to help convince the judges to actually show up.

❑

We'd like to ask members what they think about limiting LIVING CITY tables to six players. We hope that doing so will increase the attractiveness of judging LC events, but we would like your feedback before we make our final decision. Send us a letter, postcard, or Email by January 15, and we'll make the decision based on what you tell us.

A World of Your Own

Dark and alien places, part 2

by Roger E. Moore

Last month, we looked at an original AD&D® campaign set in a sunless environment—the underdark of a small moon, Kule. The game play in Kule is founded on the exploration of unknown caves and dungeons, battles against subterranean foes, the solving of old mysteries, and (as always!) the gaining of personal wealth and experience. There are thousands of miles of underground passages on Kule, but the world still has the feeling of being small and almost cozy with its closed-in dungeon environment.

This month's campaign world is also sunless, but for a different reason; the theme and play of this campaign are unlike the previous one, too. The environment of this new world is played out in the open, on a spherical world's surface. Though the themes of exploration, mystery solving, personal growth, and defeating foes are present here, there are also nightmarish and unearthly scenes, and survival is a key problem. Paranoia, anxiety, and fear are hallmarks of this campaign, as in the RAVENLOFT® campaign's Demiplane of Dread—but there are important differences between that setting and this one, as will be seen.

Night Everlasting

Our DM this month is Norman, a fan of horror settings. Hoping to develop a personal gaming universe, Norm tinkers with creating a new "island of terror" for the RAVENLOFT campaign but abandons this, preferring an actual planet. His vision of a new world is influenced by the Cthulhu tales of H.P. Lovecraft and others, featuring a chaotic cosmos apparently geared toward destroying mankind—nothing personal here, as is often the case in Ravenloft.

Norm also likes the works of William Hope Hodgson, an early 20th century horror writer noted for his novel, *The Night Land*. In this book, Hodgson described a monster-infested Earth far in the future after the sun has died; humanity, barricaded in a single pyramid-like city called the Last Redoubt, faces extinction but never relents in its struggle against the fantastic beasts and terrors at the end of time.

Could this happen to an AD&D game world? Norm scribbles some notes and soon generates the outlines of his new campaign, based upon a briefly described setting from the out-of-print AD&D module Q1, *Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, on pages 17-18: the Nightworld of Vlad Tolenkov.

Nightworld (Norm's working title for the setting) was a normal AD&D world like Oerth or Toril, with the usual intelligent races and monsters. Then, without warning, this world's sun had an unexpected eclipse—and was *gone*. The sun had entered a gigantic antimagical dead zone, a wildspace *sargasso* (as described in the SPELLJAMMER® setting) that snuffed out the magical connection from the fire body to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Darkness and cold fell over the world in moments. Seas began to freeze, cold winds howled, peoples rioted, and the end of life was at hand.

This event came to be known as Blackout, and the sentient response to it as the Time of Madness. In an effort to save their worshipers and themselves, many local gods swiftly sacrificed the majority of their power, merging their divine essence with the earth to draw deep volcanic heat close to the surface. This caused a vast upsurge in earthquakes and volcanic activity across the world, but it saved most of the world's life as well.

However, the Sacrifice (as it is now called) and Blackout spawned explosions of wild magic that horribly altered many living beings. Worse, a number of non-neutral deities native to this world vanished after Blackout, in a cataclysmic battle fought during the Sacrifice between extreme alignments. This, the Highslaying, prevented the world from falling into the claws of evil gods entirely, as local conditions were ripe for it. The gods who survived the Highslaying and Sacrifice were reduced in power (most are now demigods), but they are desperately sought and highly involved patrons of their current worshipers.

About a thousand years have passed since the legendary time of Blackout. Many people no longer believe there ever was a sun in the sky, though educated folk sadly know better. Let's look at Norm's world and see how different a place it is.

Modifications: As a last gesture to help humanity survive the days after Blackout, some of the surviving gods caused deliberate changes in their followers, altering them to better adapt to Nightworld's sunless horrors. (Norm was influenced here by the pseudo-undead entry from the *Monster Manual II*, which he borrowed and modified.) A few highlights from Norman's modifications to standard AD&D set-ups are noted here.

Some changed humans became carnivorous hunters, meat-eaters and blood-drinkers with 90-foot infravision, quiet movements, and great resistance to cold. Their pale faces, long fangs, great strength, and peculiar appetites make them look much like vampires. These expert hunters are popularly known as Stalker folk, to distinguish them from the true vampires that Stalkers hate.

Other humans developed the ability to detect and consume any sort of organic matter, even carrion, gaining powerful senses of smell and taste. Their fingernails have become claws with a mild poison that temporarily paralyzes attackers. They also have light-enhancing "starlight" vision that allows them to see outdoors as well as if the sun were still out. These ghoul-like humans are called Gatherers, as they rarely hunt live prey.

Another deity severely altered his own followers—all goblins—to grant them flight. The three-foot-tall, thin-boned Aerials resemble short werebats; they are covered in dark-red fur and have pug noses, needle-sharp teeth, tiny yellow eyes, and huge ears. Their arms have become broad bat wings with fingers at the first wing joint. They have 30-foot infravision and 240-foot echolocation "sonar," useful for open-air flight. Though not always evil, Aerials are often nasty, selfish, and crude. (Their statistics are like those of goblins in *The Complete Book of Humanoids*.)

Other human types resemble cloth-wrapped mummies, wights, or other corporeal monsters or undead. The "mummies," for instance, are normal humans of a particular religion, wrapping their bodies in mourning for their slain world and pantheons; many of these people are powerful specialty priests.

Some large human cities survived Blackout, accommodating themselves to the awful new world. In most cases, high walls have been built up in several rings around a hilltop city, fortress, manor, or castle. Between each ring, livestock is kept and fed on fungi, roots, and other vegetation. Small lakes, fed by cold rivers and carefully checked for poisons, bring citizens their needed water. Nets capture blind, albino river fish for food. Priests and wizards cast *continual light* spells on rocks and poles in the outlying countryside, to warn of approaching monsters. Huge nets hang over city streets and from tower to tower, catching carnivorous bats and other unpleasant night fliers later slain by town guards or armed citizens. Archers and seige machines are plentiful, to ward off marauders and wilderness beasts.

Each city is inhabited primarily by a single race, with rare travelers from distant cities bringing trade goods, news, and so on. People awaken, work, eat, and sleep in three shifts of about eight hours each; time is kept by watching star movements (the world still rotates) and is announced by bells, horns, or criers.

Vast dungeons have been excavated below the cities for sleeping and food-growing space and as emergency shelters. Underground rivers and aquifers are tapped. Mines bring up a coal-like flammable rock used as fuel. Ventilation shafts circulate air with the aid of huge, animal- or human-powered fans, pushing out smoke through great smokestacks. Tunnels also reveal subterranean foes like bulettes, umber hulks, purple worms, or ankhegs that attempt to dig their way under cities, so the tunnels are stoutly built and heavily patrolled. In some cities, long tunnels reach out to nearby hills, where small fortresses and communities are built. Earthquakes are feared, and many tunnels are magically reinforced. Few large underground chambers are built, to avoid mass casualties in case of a roof collapse.

Neutral and evil human necromancers have been brought into military and government service, raising numerous skeletons to serve as simple laborers and massed soldiers. Necromancers oversee the construction of tunnels, walls, reservoirs, roads, and other works; some are military officers, and a few are medical doctors. (As a side note, zombies deteriorate over time, smell awful, and often disturb onlookers who might recognize the bodies as former family members or friends. Fresh bodies are thus dumped into pits containing rot grubs or scavenging insects, which clean all dead flesh from the bones; a *cloudkill* spell slays the scavengers, and the bones are then *animated* for service.)

The open air of Nightworld is always cool, about 45-50 degrees Fahrenheit in still air. Winds are rare and usually the result of magic or atmospheric disturbances from volcanoes. The sky is cloudless and filled with thousands of stars. Surface dwellers can see their breath if light is available. Thick clothing is worn in layers, with sandals over foot wrappings when normal shoes or boots are not available. Gloves are rare but hats common, worn as much out of fear of dangerous bats as for warmth. Armor is always padded for heating, then oiled or wrapped to reduce its noise.

The most common surface livestock of Nightworld are goats, sheep, and pigs, which proved hardier than cattle (the latter now nearly extinct). Horses are carefully kept and extremely valuable. Wild and giant boars have been captured and domesticated in some areas, and giant goats are used as mounts in others. Chickens and geese are kept in magically lit underground chambers. Manure from livestock is used in huge fungus farms above and below ground. Dogs, wolves, and giant rats are used as pets.

Of the demihumans, the dwarves fared best, as their great underground cities were perfect shelters. Their armies brave the horrors of the surface to gather supplies and treasures from abandoned centers of civilization. Hill and mountain dwarves eventually shared their buried kingdoms with humans, halflings, and other friendly surface races, leaving aboveground structures and upper dungeon levels to the "star lovers."

The crafty duergar—the gray dwarves—held their own buried kingdoms, but they enslaved the strongest and most lawful (thus most trustworthy) humanoids as workers and war fodder. Goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins survived the Time of Madness in large numbers, either as slaves of the duergar or in their own buried enclaves. Humanoids and duergar have become less evil (as so many evil gods perished in the Highslaying), though they are still unpleasant, aggressive, competitive, and tyrannical.

Gnomes are popularly thought to have been largely wiped out by Blackout. However, they survive in secret, using illusions and stealth to keep their

enclaves hidden. A few gnomes live with other peoples. Nightworld gnomes are not tinkers or machine-lovers; they are solemn, secretive, and know much about their dark world. Illusionist/thieves are very common, acting as scouts and spies.

Every kind of elf, however, has been nearly wiped out. Their forests gone, high and gray elves went mad; only a handful survive, but as monsters, their minds unhinged. Their faerie cousins, such as pixies and sprites, suffered the same fate or died. Aquatic elves and other sea races have nearly vanished, replaced by ferocious sahuagin, sharks, aquatic trolls, and ixitxachitl. Drow were devastated by legions of dwarves and their allies who engaged in great wars to make their part of the underdark safe.

Chaotic-evil beings—gnolls, bugbears, ogres—suffered greatly, never able to pull together to overcome the terrible challenges of the Blackout and after. Unorganized surface creatures have become worse than savages, abandoned by their gods and preyed upon by monsters and each other. In many ruined cities, barbaric humans and humanoids battle for survival. Mongrelmen—distorted beings created from bursts of wild magic that flared over the world as the sun died and the gods warred—hide in many other ruins.

Allowable PC races include humans (in all their new forms), dwarves (hill, mountain, and gray), halflings (stout and hairfoot), gnomes, and—using *The Complete Book of Humanoids*—mongrelmen, goblins (and Aerials), orcs, and hobgoblins. Common classes include fighters, rangers, barbarians (from *The Complete Barbarian's Handbook*), specialty priests, gray druids (from *The Complete Druid's Handbook*), thieves, and wizards, especially necromancers. Bards are rare; paladins and most druids are unknown. Norman keeps notes for future PCs types from lands based on other cultures.

The foes facing the civilized world are great. These threats are on the whole random, chaotic, and unthinking, unlike the Dark Powers of the Ravenloft demiplane. Duergar, humanoids, and rebel necromancers provide the bulk of organized "thinking" villains, though some vampires and liches rule minor kingdoms of undead created from the countless bodies of those who died in Blackout. Dragons, giants, and beholders survived as well, but mutated into new forms thanks to wild magic and other forces. Norm wishes for these to have horrific appearances and behaviors, and he borrows critter ideas from MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® RAVENLOFT appendices.

Many new species of wild trolls rampage over the dark lands, consuming everything they find. Some "cleanup crew" monsters normally seen in dungeons (e.g., slimes, oozes, puddings, and jellies) are found in the open. Huge, mindless vermin have spread over the world: giant beetles, ants, spiders, slugs, and more scour the land for every last scrap of organic matter, consuming even the soil. (Giant ants and beetles now create their own underground farms and cities, though these creatures are not very intelligent individually.) Bulettes, ankhegs, purple worms, umber hulks, and so forth have mutated into new, unpredictable forms. Small bugs like cockroaches are very common.

After deciduous and evergreen surface plants perished, new plant life filled in the gaps. Giant fungi, many luminescent or poisonous (or both), are found everywhere. Great thornbush forests have sprung up, cultivated by giant insects. Thornbushes provide shelter for the insects, and their roots are nourishing food. Mosses and lichens are everywhere.

Birds are almost entirely extinct, except for fast flightless species. Flight is dangerous in near-total darkness. Anything that flies more than 1,000 feet above the ground also runs into a nearly airless region of extreme cold, the limit at which the magic-filled earth is able to warm the atmosphere. Bats, however, survive in many forms and fly about constantly, using echolocation to catch their prey and avoid collisions. Some bats have magical powers that make them unusually dangerous.

Initial Quest: The first quest for any group on Nightworld will vary greatly, depending on whether the PCs are natives or outsiders who arrived for a short visit. In the latter case, the PCs can trek across a hostile landscape in search of a legendary item. Potential allies might, of course, look like certain enemies; adventurers must learn caution and use negotiation and stealth.

In the former case, a full campaign, Norm starts small (short ventures into the outer world, plus troubles in the starting city) and builds up to bigger things (long treks across dangerous, monster-infested countryside). This gives players a chance to understand their environment and strengthens the unease they will feel about certain monsters, persons, objects, and situations.

In time, the heroes will learn that their world is in trouble. The gods' magic is not enough to counter a growing force of evil in the world, spreading chaos and madness through the great wilderness areas. Increasingly vile beasts are encountered, and bizarre events are seen and recorded. Is something behind these events? How great is the danger the world faces? The PCs will have to find out.

Player's Viewpoint: The players will quickly learn that the safest place for their heroes is underground in a dungeon, and the most dangerous place is on the surface in the open air—quite the reverse from the usual state of affairs!

As noted before, Nightworld is played for mystery and fear. Virtually nothing is known about the world outside of a handful of fortified or buried cities. Volcanic regions might have bizarre new cultures and forms of life, but no one is sure. Wilderness monsters are drawn to sources of light and sound, so anyone crossing uncivilized lands must do so silently and in hiding. Carelessness results in massed, insane attacks by countless horrors. (Obviously, intercity trade is infrequent at best on this world.)

Resources: Aside from borrowing game material from various RAVENLOFT and *Call of Cthulhu* sources, Norm makes sure to scan horror products for other games: Steve Jackson Games' *GURPS Horror* rules, Mayfair's *Chill* system, and so on. New species of life are adapted from books Norman finds in the local library on mushrooms, fungi, insects, and nocturnal creatures. He even makes use of TSR's GAMMA WORLD® rules for new "mutations" to add to some of the grossly changed lifeforms on Nightworld to make them more frightening and dangerous in effect. Norm uses the special methods for describing encounters from the RAVENLOFT rules to enhance the element of fear and uncertainty in game play.

As final notes, Norm elects to allow psionics (wild talents only) but not spelljamming. Travel to other planes is very difficult, and some high-level priest spells are not available, since most gods are only demigods. Undead are harder than usual to turn or destroy, but not impossible. The Fear Check from the RAVENLOFT rules is kept for meeting certain wilderness monsters. ❑

What you've been waiting for — Pre-Registration info for

Winter Fantasy™ Game Convention

The event that game masters, club presidents, and convention coordinators cannot afford to miss!

February 9 - 11, 1996
MECCA, Milwaukee WI

When we looked at plans for this year's WINTER FANTASY convention, the RPGA® Network's annual gathering, we felt that we could and should do a lot better than just offer another convention for you to attend. Sure, we can offer first-run LIVING CITY™ and LIVING JUNGLE™ events, plus a bunch of other first-run events for members to enjoy. We still like our ability to use the convention to launch new Network programs, but these days, many other good conventions offer almost as much. With the Network's resources and contacts, couldn't we do better? Couldn't we offer something unique?

We could, we can, and we shall. We looked at our members' needs, what our members were asking for, and made a realization. There is not one convention that caters especially to game masters, that provides opportunities for them to learn tricks of the trade and gain key insights into the uses of different campaign worlds and game systems. There is not one convention that caters especially to convention coordinators, that allows them to meet with industry professionals and to learn tips for making their conventions even better. There is not one convention that caters to club presidents, allowing them to make contacts in the industry which might later benefit their clubs.

Now there is one.

With this in mind, WINTER FANTASY is taking on a new look and a new focus. Game masters, con coordinators, club presidents, and other people who really make the hobby function will find special treats just for them. And if you are considering getting started judging Network events, this is a great place to start. Experienced judges will be available to provide support, encouragement, and feedback to help you on your way. If you happen to be a Grandmaster judge, then perhaps you can find some new tricks to learn (or some old ones to pass on).

Of course, we're not going to change it too much; WINTER FANTASY has traditionally provided one of the best places for Network members to meet, socialize, and play great games with one another, and that won't change.

We will still be offering new Network programs. Look for the premier of the newest (and we think best) Living setting, the LIVING DEATH™ campaign. LIVING CITY players are in for a treat too, as we launch a new phase in the city's history. And the Network tournaments are still the absolute best we have to offer.

Read about all of the exciting opportunities that will be offered, and then don't hesitate to send in your pre-registration today. Don't miss out, send it today.

RPGA® NETWORK

Some people you must meet:

RPGA NETWORK STAFF
Scott Douglas • RPGA Network Coordinator
Duane Maxwell • POLYHEDRON Newszine Editor
Robert Wiese • Tournament Program Coordinator
Judy Mueller • Network Clerk

FASA CORP.
Lou Prosperi • Designer of the *Earthdawn* game

FLYING BUFFALO
Rick Loomis • Creator of too many games to mention

MAG FORCE 7
Margaret Weis • Co-creator of *Star of the Guardian*
Don Perrin • Co-creator of *Star of the Guardian* & *Wing Commander*
Jeff Grubb • Co-creator of *Wing Commander*

MAYFAIR GAMES
Doug Tabb • Editor of *Underground*
Irella Wilhite • Director of *Cosmic Encounters*
Tom Smith • Designer of *Fantasy Adventures*

THUNDER CASTLE GAMES
Mike Sager • *Highlander: The Card Game* Designer
Bill Littlepage • *Highlander: The Role-Playing Game* Designer

TSR
Jim Ward • SPELLFIRE card game Creator
Anne Brown • *Masque of the Red Death* Editor
Colin McComb • Designer of BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting
Steve Winter • Creative Director of AD&D core books
Steven Schend • BLOOD WARS card game Creator
Plus many more designers and artists

WIZARDS OF THE COAST
Steve Bishop • Writer/Designer of *Ars Magica*
Wade Racine • Creative Director of *Ars Magica*

CONVENTION COORDINATORS
Ed Kramer • Dragon Con
Gary Smith • GAMA Trade Show & Origins
Vinnie Salzillo • Dex Con & Dreamation
Ken Whitman • GEN CON Game Fair & WINTER FANTASY Convention

Special Events

LIVING DEATH™ Campaign Premier

Welcome to the Network's newest and most provocative Living setting, LIVING DEATH. This exciting gothic mystery campaign takes place across Gothic Earth, described in the popular *Masque of the Red Death* expansion to the RAVENLOFT® setting. Battle the natural and the supernatural as part of a secret society, but be careful; you may not know who your friends are. Two tournaments begin this campaign for sophisticated role-players. Any LIVING DEATH event table can be made a Benefit event by contributing $5 at the table.

Come see the hottest new games and worlds!

Demos Galore

Look for demonstrations of the hottest games in our huge Demo Hall! FASA, Mayfair, Wizards of the Coast, TSR, and others will show you the latest and coolest new games. All demos will offer RPGA Network Player points for participants.

Charity Auction

Sunday's auction gives you the chance to pick up some unique items, including some LIVING CITY and LIVING JUNGLE things for your characters. If you want to donate items, contact Network HQ.

Special Tournaments

- DRAGON DICE™ Winter Championships: TSR's new expandable dice game
- SPELLFIRE® Tournament: TSR's quick and simple card game about the AD&D® worlds.
- BLOOD WARS™ Tournament: TSR's cool card game based on the PLANESCAPE™ setting.
- *Magic: The Gathering*: Need we say more?
- *Sim City*: Mayfair's city-building collectible card game.
- *Highlander*: Thunder Castle Games's ultimate one-on-one collectible card game.
- *Middle Earth*: ICE's new collectible card game based on Tolken's Middle Earth.
- *Dawn Patrol* National Championships: The annual event returns. Battle through legions of enemies to take home the trophy this year.

••• Plus more to come ••

Awards Luncheon and Ceremony

The traditional Network breakfast is now an awards luncheon for all attendees. Come socialize after the last gaming slot and stay for the Awards Ceremony. Those who are not eating can join us later for the ceremony.

The luncheon begins at 1:30 pm Sunday afternoon, and the Awards Ceremony begins at 2:30.

LIVING CITY™ Interactive: Winter Festival

Come celebrate the new year in RAVENS BLUFF™ with a celebration of LIVING CITY characters. This Winter Festival is being sponsored by the Temple of Tymora and the Knight's Council. Planned events include a parade of knights, a knightly joust, open melee competitions, a cliff diving competition, something we call "Bobsledding," a juggling contest, and many other fabulous games and events. The land office will be open to confirm current land ownership and to authorize new land sales. Building inspectors will be on hand to authorize new buildings and reconstruction.

A number of merchants will be open doing business and the Crescent Moon Inn will be open providing refreshments, for a small fee. Visit the city courthouse and chat (or plead) with Judge Rupert T. Hangman. See the City Watch to join up or to register your creatures and animals. And bring a gift, because the highlight of the festival will be the noble wedding of Lord Charles Lavergne Blacktree IV to Lady Katherine Marie Moorland, an event all are invited to.

So bring your money, and a painted miniature of your character, to the New Year's Celebration in RAVENS BLUFF, at Winter Fantasy.

The Interactive runs in Slot 9, Sunday 8 am to 1 pm.

MGM, Grand Gaming Association Games

MGM, GGA, a Network club of long standing that runs many events at the GEN CON® Game Fair, presents the following events:

Magic: The Gathering Tournament: slots 2, 4, 6, 8
Champions Adventure I: slots 2, 5, 9
Champions Adventure II: slots 3, 6
AD&D Visual: slots 1, 4, 7
Battletech Game: slots 3, 6, 9
Star Wars Adventure: slots 1, 4, 7
Advanced Civilization Game: slots 2, 5, 8

Special Prizes

Win fame and great stuff by claiming the prizes in:

- *Gamer Gambit* - the player who nets the most wins in Network events gets a special prize
- *DM Dare* - the DM who runs the most Network events with the best judge scores garners a special prize.
- *DM Champion* - The highest scoring winner of the Judge Invitational will be named Champion DM and take home a special trophy for a year.
- The competition for the position of *Lord Speaker of the Advisory Council of Ravens Bluff* concludes for LC players. Applicants must play both LIVING CITY events.

The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

Mercenary Army Gathers on Plains

A large army of mercenaries, adventurers, and sell-swords has appeared on the plains north and east of the city. Scouts estimate that it is three days' travel from the city gates. Recruiters have been hiring in the city for the past two months, ostensibly for a campaign in the south. They claim that this location was chosen to form the army because of the large supply of available mercenaries. Scouts also report that large numbers of orcs, gnolls, hobgoblins, and even bugbears make up some of the divisions of this force.

Lord Mayor O'Kane expressed initial concern that such a large body of potential enemies was gathering near the city, but further reports from scouts and other unidentified sources have relieved both him and the Council of Lords. The reports indicate that the army has definite plans for moving south over the Earthfast Mountains and even to the coast. Letters arranging for supplies along this route and maps showing the route and possible trouble spots were brought away as evidence. It was even discovered that one of the merchants in Ravens Bluff is supplying these troops, and as Lord Varro argued, "They wouldn't arrange to buy traveling supplies from our merchants if they intended to attack." Only Lord Blacktree remained unconvinced, reminding the council that "Ravens Bluff is south of their current position, you know."

To allay the concerns of the citizens, O'Kane has recalled the army he sent into the Earthfast Mountains. Blacktree reported, "The humanoid groups have been dispersed and there is no immediate threat from that quarter." The Field General expressed relief at the recall, saying that he had wedding plans to attend to. Blacktree will marry Lady Katherine Marie Moorland at the upcoming Winter Festival.

Lost Adventurers Return

Last evening a thick fog settled on the ground outside of the city walls and remained for several hours. Wizards from the Ministry of Art could not determine whether the effect was magical until several figures wandered out of the fog, dazed and confused. Many were adventurers known to be lost under mysterious circumstances. These people muttered about a strange land filled with evil, and thanked their various gods for release. In an attempt to discover what happened, the Ministry of Art is interviewing all of the adventurers who arrived via the mysterious fog.

All LIVING CITY™ PCs who were trapped in Ravenloft have been released and may play in any LC tournament.

House of Critters Moved

Due to the continual hassles over permits, DMI has purchased a large piece of land to the south of the city for the construction of the House of Critters. This site is less than a mile from the city walls. "We are trying to bring something exciting to the citizens of this fair city," said Connor-of-Galway, Chief Executive Officer of DMI, "and we want to get on with it. Relocation seemed the best course. We will provide transportation to the site for all citizens." Townspeople seemed relieved, though many expressed interest in visiting the House of Critters and sampling its challenges.

Discount Merlin's House of Critters opens at Concentric, March 7-10 1996, Rosemont, IL.

Society News

Welcome all! I'm Jacinth "Jackie" Moonspring, your new society editor. Every month, look here for the latest scoop on the city's glitterati.

Where better than to start than right at the top? It seems that Charles Oliver, the Lord Mayor himself, has been involved in a love triangle of sorts. It all goes back to the gathering known as Dragon® Con 1994. The big buzz there was the announced engagement of the beautifully dangerous Allandra Mystallan *(played by Sherrie Miller of NC)* and the dashing former wildmage Belanor Fenmarel *(played by Michael Capps of NC)*. At this same soirée, Belanor first announced his candidacy for Mayor. Allandra was standing beside him during his announcement speech, smiling the whole time. Lo and behold, less than a month later, at the Ravens Bluff Bazaar *(GEN CON® Game Fair 1994)*, who is seen on the arm of the Lord Mayor the whole day, but Allandra herself!

It doesn't end there. Earlier this year, we heard that the engagement was off for unspecified reasons, and Belanor was not heard from for several months. But like a bolt from the blue, he and O'Kane got into a tiff at the recent Founder's Day Celebrations *(GEN CON Game Fair 1995)*. The lovely Allandra was nowhere to be seen. Coincidence?

My sources confirm that Charles Oliver is about to make a major political move regarding Belanor. No word on what this is; apparently the Mayor is playing this one close to his chest.

Well, I've got to run; I have an interview with Lady Katherine in an hour. Ta!

Column written by Wayne S. Melnick of Florida. If you have any gossip you think is worthy of print and that you think the people of Ravens Bluff should know, contact Wayne either through Network HQ or directly by e-mail at "Cateyes01@aol.com".

Forgotten Deities

Ssethh/Vaerae

by Eric Boyd

Power:	Intermediate
Plane:	Abyss
AoC:	Intelligent Snakes, Yuan-ti
Align:	CE
WAL:	CE (Yuan-ti)
Symbol:	Flying snake with fangs bared
Sex:	Male

This deity is the Realms-based aspect of the deity Merrshaulk as described in *Monster Mythology*, p. 100. In the Realms, Ssethh's avatar appears as a giant magic-using winged snake. He is worshipped deep within the heart of the jungles of Chult by yuan-ti and is little heard of elsewhere in the Realms.

During the Time of Troubles, Ssethh supposedly appeared in the jungles of Chult, taking the body of a massive giant sea snake that could move about on land and had giant wings. Tales abound of his titanic battles with massive dinosaurs and other monsters.

Ssethh's Priests

Only yuan-ti abominations may be specialty priests of Ssethh. Human-headed yuan-ti abomination specialty priests are limited to 12th level. All other yuan-ti abomination specialty priests are limited to 10th level. These priests are expected to travel throughout the Realms furthering the stratagems of the yuan-ti.

In addition to the spheres listed under the entry for Merrshaulk, specialty priests of Ssethh gain the minor spheres of Elemental (Fire) and Weather. Healing is changed to allow both reversed and non-reversed spells. Specialty priests and mages in Ssethh's favor are often granted flying snakes as familiars (much as imps or guasits may be given to evil human priests). Yuan-ti necromancers are granted deathfangs instead. (See the *Monstrous Compendium* sheet in *Ruins of Undermountain* for Snake, Flying.)

AB Wis 14*, Dex 12*; **AL** CE; **WP** any; **AR** none; **RA** none; **SP** All, Animal, Chaos*, Charm*, Combat*, Divination, Elemental (Fire)*, Healing, Plant, Weather*; **SPL** nil; **PW** 1) immune to snake or reptile poison, 5) sticks to (poisonous) snakes (P4); **TU** nil; **QS** animal horde (all snakes).

Vaerae (aspect of Ssethh)

Power:	Demi-Prime
AoC:	Snakes
Align:	CN (E)
WAL:	C
Symbol:	Two-headed snake (one head at each end) with heads locked in mortal combat
Sex:	Male

This obscure snake cult is popular in northern (rural) Calimshan and the Vilhon Reach, having come from nomadic tribes who are usually found on the Shining Plains. The creed of the priesthood demands that no snake be harmed, that anyone harming a snake be maimed, and that anyone killing a snake be slain. Vaerae is believed to have been worshipped in the North centuries ago as Repra, a beast cult totem. Signs of the snake totem's worship are still found in the area of the Farsea Marshes and the Vast Swamp.

Like many demipowers, Vaerae was severely weakened during the Time of Troubles, and during that turbulent period he was slain by Ssethh, the yuan-ti god whose worship is centered in Chult. Since that time, Ssethh has assumed Vaerae's power and portfolio, and has begun granting Vaerae's clergy expanded powers through this new aspect.

Ssethh sees these snake cults dedicated to Vaerae as an opportunity for expanding his influence in the Realms and directly acquiring more power. Ssethh has sent yuan-ti purebloods to infiltrate the cults, assume leadership roles, and then direct them according to the interests of the yuan-ti. The cultists are able to provide valuable support and anonymity for yuan-ti agents infiltrating lands from Calimshan to the Vilhon Reach.

Vaerae's Priests

All priests of Vaerae, who may be humans or yuan-ti purebloods, are treated as specialty priests of Ssethh, except that they are limited to 7th level of ability. Yuan-ti abominations always worship Ssethh directly.

AB Wis 14*, Dex 12*; **AL** CN or CE; **WP** any; **AR** none; **RA** robe made of the skin of a giant snake; **SP** All, Animal Chaos*, Charm*, Combat*, Divination, Elemental (Fire)*, Healing, Plant, Weather*; **SPL** nil; **PW** 1) immune to snake or reptile poison, 5) sticks to (poisonous) snakes (P4); **TU** nil; **QS** animal horde (all snakes).

❑

Jungle Tales

Bengoukee stepped into the firelight and looked at the children gathered there, his gaze settling briefly on a few of them. "Hmmph," he snorted. "It is time that you began to learn more of the world beyond your village," he began. "There are many mysteries, many taboos, and many beliefs that you must know when dealing with the peoples of other tribes and races. Tonight, we will begin with two tales: one of the saru and one of the shu. Listen well, young ones, and learn."

The World Rests on the Back of a Toad

The saru believe that the world rests on the back of a giant toad, which they call Pakweesa, "the Ancient One." According to them, Pakweesa has been sitting for eons, trying to catch the sun, and sometimes after a rain-shower, its many-colored tongue may be seen, reaching out across the sky.

Some also maintain that the moon is in reality one of Pakweesa's eyes, opening and closing at regular intervals. Wise men say that Pakweesa is wont to stir from time to time, causing the ground to lurch and shake. His other eye is always turned toward the sun, which he watches hungrily. If he ever succeeds in swallowing it, this would mean eternal darkness and, by and by, the end of our world. So the saru offer him gifts to appease his hunger.

Pakweesa's existence is also the reason why no saru would ever harm a toad - they fear the Ancient One's wrath.

Why The Shu Must Not Kill Each Other

One day when the world was young, three shu brothers were hunting in the jungle.

After some time they chanced upon a little clearing where they found a strange shu, peacefully asleep in the shadow of a tree. Their glance fell upon the jewel-encrusted short bow that was slung over the other shu's shoulder and envy filled their minds. The three brothers looked at each other and nodded; they understood each other without words. They would simply kill the stranger and take the splendid weapon.

So the first hunter set his blowgun to his lips. His aim was true and the tiny arrow buried itself in the sleeper's heart. Little did he know, however, that this was none other than the mighty Chuk'aa, the hero to whom the sprits themselves had granted invulnerability as a reward for his countless deeds of valor. Chuk'aa just grunted sleepily and brushed the arrow off with his hand as if it had been of no more consequence than a mosquito's sting. At that the three brothers grew frightened, but their greed was still stronger than their fear. The second brother tried to kill the stranger, and then the third - all to no avail. Mere mortal weapons could not harm Chuk'aa, beloved of the spirits.

It was only then the Chuk'aa awoke, and it did not take him long to understand why was going on. Chuk'aa grew very, very angry. "Miserable thieves!" he thundered. "Did you really think to catch the great Chuk'aa unawares? Well, I shall teach you to murder peaceful travellers in their sleep!" With those words he advanced upon the three brothers, and when he was done, not one of them remained standing.

Arms akimbo, Chuk'aa surveyed the groaning would-be murderers. "Let that be a lesson to you", he said, "and tell your people that if I ever hear of another shu laying hands on one of his brother-shu, be it for greed or for any other reason, he will suffer a much worse punishment than the three of you. Now go!"

The three brothers dragged themselves back to their village and reported to the elders what had happened to them. Word of it soon reached the other shu tribes and, within a few days, spread throughout all of Malatra. And ever since that time, no shu has dared harm another shu, for they are afraid that Chuk'aa might still be watching.

"Not all shu or saru believe these legends, but most do. Now go to your mats and dream." The aged koroborkuru witch doctor turns and walks into the darkness, the thump of his walking stick echoing back to the fire.

Artwork by Valerie Vallese

Larger Than Life

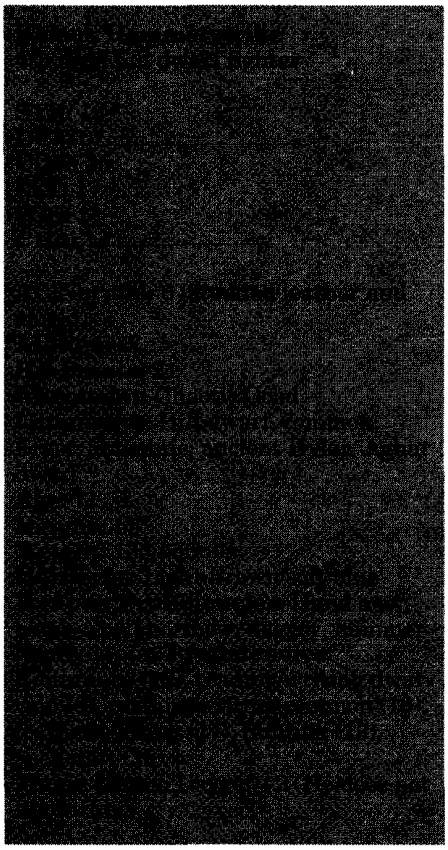
The Odd Couple

by Lawrence Hurley

"The silver dragon soared through the bright skies above Abanasinia, her eyes continually searching for any signs of her mutated draconian kin in the war-torn land. Enjoying the warm southern breeze despite her important mission, the dragon glided on a comforting cushion of air. Her searching eyes suddenly focused onto two figures walking up a small hillock. Instantly alert, the leviathan dropped down so that she was just over the treetops. Not sure what to expect, she glided behind them soundlessly, watching for the slightest hint of danger.

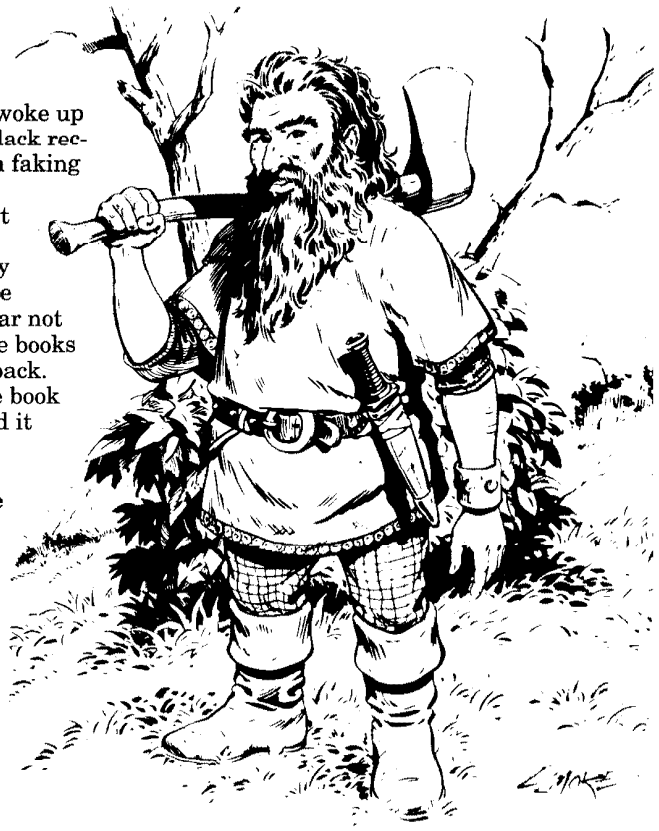
She relaxed slightly as she noticed they were both small creatures, dwarf-sized; nevertheless, she remained cautious. As she came in for the initial flypast, the smaller of the figures, which she recognized now as a gully dwarf, turned and saw her. He immediately began to shake wildly on the arm of his companion. "Dragon! Dragon! Dragon!", he shrieked, flinging himself to the ground and covering his head with his grimy hands.

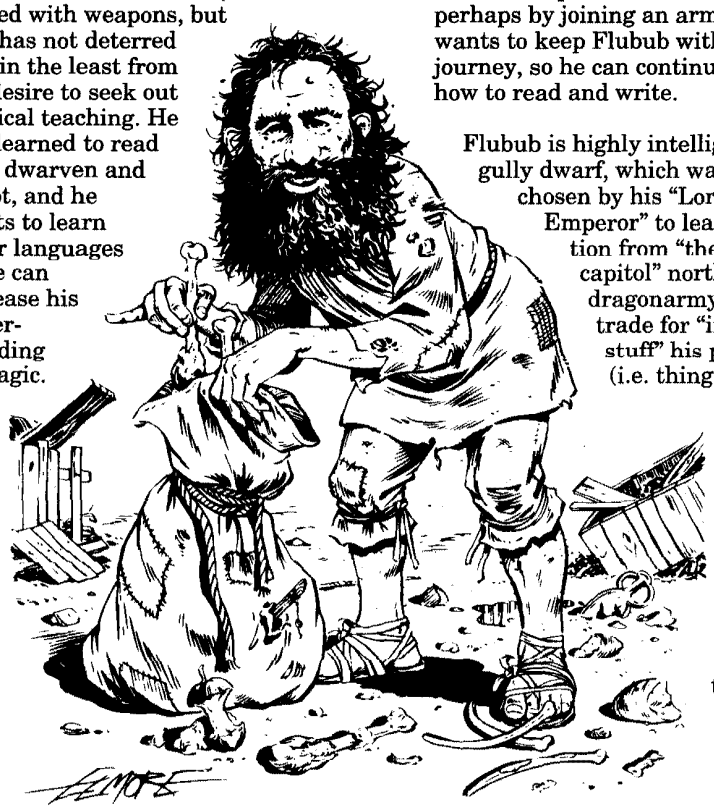
As the smaller dwarf was carrying on about his impending demise, the other dwarf, a hill dwarf by the looks of him, looked straight into the dragon's eyes and nodded. It was a sign of goodwill and respect with not a trace of fear, and the dragon was quite surprised. She shook her head in amazement at the sight of the two unlikely companions. "What an odd partnership" she muttered and flew on, her mind on other matters.



What an odd partnership indeed! The two of them met when Kalack happened upon a group of Aghar being decimated by a couple of draconians out for some sport. One of the Aghar was knocked unconscious (or passed out in fright) and the draconians were chasing down the other fleeing Aghar. Kalack crept up and dragged away the downed gully dwarf. When the Aghar woke up some moments later, Kalack recognized that he had been faking unconsciousness all along. Annoyed at first at being fooled by a gully dwarf, Kalack was nearly ready to leave him for the draconians, had the Aghar not been staring at one of the books peeking out of Kalack's pack. Intrigued, he showed the book to the Aghar, who opened it upside down and leafed through it as if it were perfectly comprehensible that way. When Kalack asked the Aghar if he wanted to learn to read the book, the gully dwarf introduced himself as Flubub, sage to the court of the Lord High Emperor Huublik, and calmly claimed that he already knew how to read. The two have been together ever since.

Kalack grew up in the hill dwarven community of Hillhome, the son of a respected smith. He was apprenticed to a leatherworker, and became quite adept at leatherworking, but his heart was not in it. His one true love was magic. Despite his racial heritage, he wants nothing more than to become a mage. He believes that dwarves can learn to work magic, and that the dwarven inability to do so comes from a cultural tradition so deeply held that none choose to question it. Older dwarves simply shook their heads sadly when he argued this view, but he has remained undaunted. He was packing his things in preparation for a journey to seek a Tower of High Sorcery when word came that the dragonarmies had destroyed a nearby village. He could not shirk his duty to his people, so he took up arms with the other dwarves of his commu-



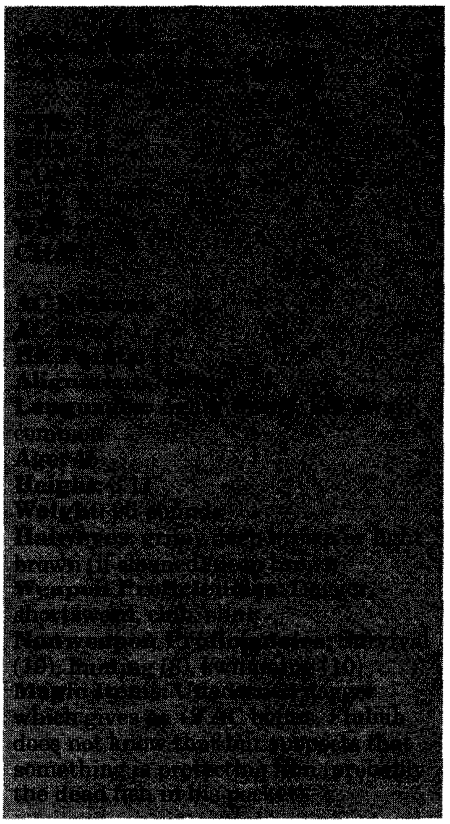


He had risen to the rank of sergeant within the dwarven company he served with when they were outflanked by a dragonarmy advance guard and nearly destroyed. After escaping the debacle that shattered the company, he travelled north toward the lands around Solace. On the way he encountered a small band of gully dwarves being massacred by a contingent of draconians. He managed to save one of the Aghar, a gully dwarf "noble" named Flubub Phlup. Rather than getting rid of Flubub as soon as he could, he decided to help him and hopes to educate him as he seems of above average intelligence.

Kalack is friendly, noble, and respectful. He is also coolheaded and helpful to strangers. He wants to see more of the world, so he might be inclined to accompany a good-intentioned group of people to other lands. In one of these journeys he hopes to find a White Robe (or Red Robe) who is willing to look past his dwarven heritage and teach him magic. Currently, he is travelling to Solace to meet the smith, Theros Ironfeld, who is known in Hillhome. (He does not know that Solace has been destroyed, captured and liberated since last he heard news.) Once there he hopes to travel to Solamnia, perhaps by joining an army. He also wants to keep Flubub with him for the journey, so he can continue to teach him how to read and write.

Flubub is highly intelligent for a gully dwarf, which was why he was chosen by his "Lord High Emperor" to lead an expedition from "the Imperial capitol" northwards into dragonarmy territory to trade for "important stuff" his people needed (i.e. things his "emperor" wanted). Flubub is proud that his expedition got further into dragonarmy territory than did any of the "two" previous groups sent, even though he is their only survivor. He feels that his tactical skills and leadership abilities make him a natural replacement for his emperor should any misfortune ever befall him.

He likes Kalack and is tagging along with him in order to learn how to read and write. With that knowledge, he reasons, it is only a short step for him to master magic and become a great sorceror–king. He wants to keep quiet because he still thinks he is on the expedition even though back home they have completely forgotten about it, and wants to return with a great deal of knowledge in order to lead his tribe to greatness. He believes that Kalack knows nothing of these plans, and Flubub thinks himself wily enough to fool him. He pretends to be no more intelligent than a typical member of his race. He often acts foolishly and asks a lot of questions, the answers to which he never seems to hear all the way through. Despite the fact that he is an intellectual paragon among his people, he has not reckoned with Kalack's keen mind. He is not aware that Kalack has heard him mumbling in his sleep about his "destiny," nor does he know that Kalack has seen him gesturing wildly, pretending to cast mighty magic.



Despite his personal dreams of glory, Flubub is very loyal to Kalack because he is the only person ever to show him kindness and accept him without judging him. Among his own people, Flubub was ostracized because of his intelligence. He is beginning to suspect that Kalack is even more intelligent than he is and may know even more interesting things than he does. The only thing that worries Flubub is Kalack's interest in magic: he is afraid that Kalack might want to become Lord High Emperor of the Aghar domains. Still, Kalack did rescue him, and Flubub has not forgotten that. He feels somewhat guilty for deceiving Kalack, and has considered inviting Kalack to be one of his advisors. This decision has been troubling him a great deal lately, and he is not quite sure what to do about it. He does not realize how much he has come to value Kalack's friendship and is likely to do anything to help him, even if it means that Kalack discovers his plans. Such an action may surprise him. ❑

Larger Than Life

The Odd Couple

by Lawrence Hurley

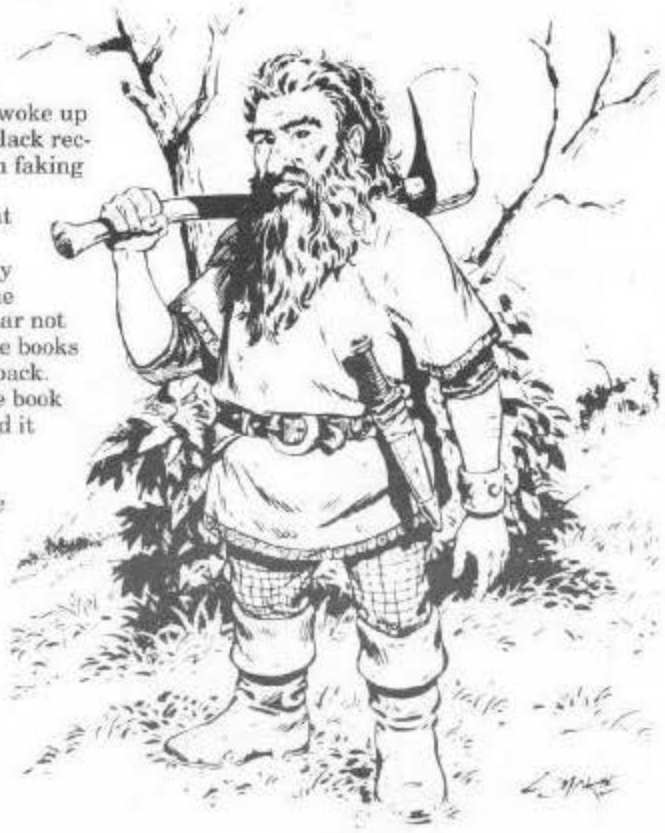
"The silver dragon soared through the bright skies above Abanasinia, her eyes continually searching for any signs of her mutated draconian kin in the war-torn land. Enjoying the warm southern breeze despite her important mission, the dragon glided on a comforting cushion of air. Her searching eyes suddenly focused onto two figures walking up a small hillock. Instantly alert, the leviathan dropped down so that she was just over the treetops. Not sure what to expect, she glided behind them soundlessly, watching for the slightest hint of danger.

She relaxed slightly as she noticed they were both small creatures, dwarf-sized; nevertheless, she remained cautious. As she came in for the initial flypast, the smaller of the figures, which she recognized now as a gully dwarf, turned and saw her. He immediately began to shake wildly on the arm of his companion. "Dragon! Dragon! Dragon!", he shrieked, flinging himself to the ground and covering his head with his grimy hands.

As the smaller dwarf was carrying on about his impending demise, the other dwarf, a hill dwarf by the looks of him, looked straight into the dragon's eyes and nodded. It was a sign of goodwill and respect with not a trace of fear, and the dragon was quite surprised. She shook her head in amazement at the sight of the two unlikely companions. "What an odd partnership" she muttered and flew on, her mind on other matters.

What an odd partnership indeed! The two of them met when Kalack happened upon a group of Aghar being decimated by a couple of draconians out for some sport. One of the Aghar was knocked unconscious (or passed out in fright) and the draconians were chasing down the other fleeing Aghar. Kalack crept up and dragged away the downed gully dwarf. When the Aghar woke up some moments later, Kalack recognized that he had been faking unconsciousness all along. Annoyed at first at being fooled by a gully dwarf, Kalack was nearly ready to leave him for the draconians, had the Aghar not been staring at one of the books peeking out of Kalack's pack. Intrigued, he showed the book to the Aghar, who opened it upside down and leafed through it as if it were perfectly comprehensible that way. When Kalack asked the Aghar if he wanted to learn to read the book, the gully dwarf introduced himself as Flubub, sage to the court of the Lord High Emperor Huublik, and calmly claimed that he already knew how to read. The two have been together ever since.

Kalack grew up in the hill dwarven community of Hillhome, the son of a respected smith. He was apprenticed to a leatherworker, and became quite adept at leatherworking, but his heart was not in it. His one true love was magic. Despite his racial heritage, he wants nothing more than to become a mage. He believes that dwarves can learn to work magic, and that the dwarven inability to do so comes from a cultural tradition so deeply held that none choose to question it. Older dwarves simply shook their heads sadly when he argued this view, but he has remained undaunted. He was packing his things in preparation for a journey to seek a Tower of High Sorcery when word came that the dragonarmies had destroyed a nearby village. He could not shirk his duty to his people, so he took up arms with the other dwarves of his commu-

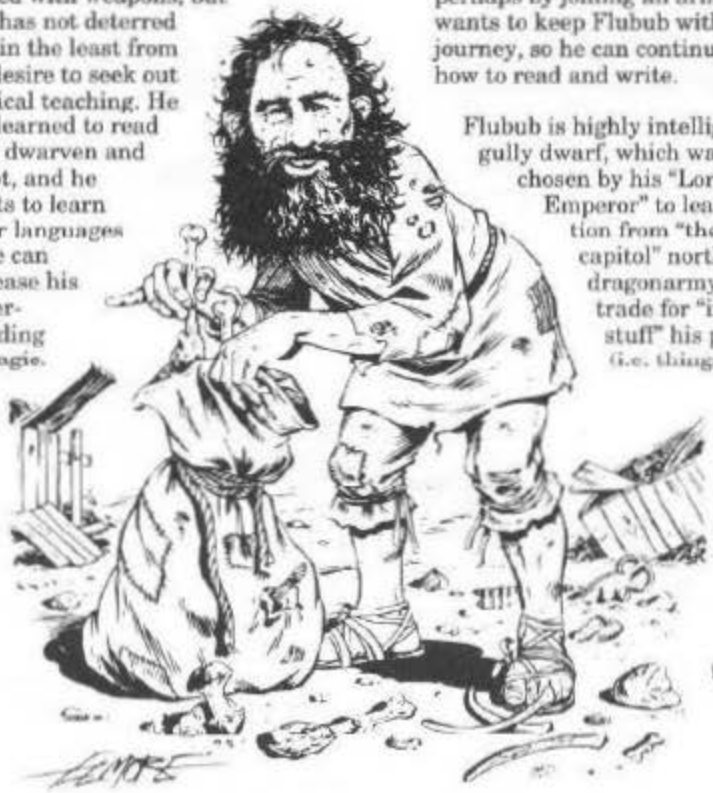


Kalack Hammerstrike
4th level hill dwarf fighter

STR: 13
DEX:10
CON: 15
INT: 17
WIS: 14
CHA: 14

AC Normal: 6 (studded leather and shield)
AC Rear: 7
Hit Points: 21
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Hill dwarf, common, Ergot, Solamnic, ancient Hylar, Aghar dwarf
Age: 71
Height: 4'5"
Weight: 135 pounds
Hair/eyes: Light Brown/soft blue
Weapon Proficiencies: Hand axe, battle axe, shortbow, dagger, hammer
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Endurance (15), reading/writing dwarven(18), reading/writing common (18), leatherworking (17), hunting (13), spellcraft (15)
Magic Items: Dagger +2 (He does not know this)

nity. He has become fairly skilled with weapons, but this has not deterred him in the least from his desire to seek out magical teaching. He has learned to read both dwarven and Ergot, and he wants to learn other languages so he can increase his understanding of magic.



He had risen to the rank of sergeant within the dwarven company he served with when they were outflanked by a dragonarmy advance guard and nearly destroyed. After escaping the debacle that shattered the company, he travelled north toward the lands around Solace. On the way he encountered a small band of gully dwarves being massacred by a contingent of draconians. He managed to save one of the Aghar, a gully dwarf "noble" named Flubub Phlup. Rather than getting rid of Flubub as soon as he could, he decided to help him and hopes to educate him as he seems of above average intelligence.

Kalack is friendly, noble, and respectful. He is also coolheaded and helpful to strangers. He wants to see more of the world, so he might be inclined to accompany a good–intentioned group of people to other lands. In one of these journeys he hopes to find a White Robe (or Red Robe) who is willing to look past his dwarven heritage and teach him magic. Currently, he is travelling to Solace to meet the smith, Theros Ironfeld, who is known in Hillhome. (He does not know that Solace has been destroyed, captured and liberated since last he heard news.) Once there he hopes to travel to Solamnia, perhaps by joining an army. He also wants to keep Flubub with him for the journey, so he can continue to teach him how to read and write.

Flubub is highly intelligent for a gully dwarf, which was why he was chosen by his "Lord High Emperor" to lead an expedition from "the Imperial capitol" northwards into dragonarmy territory to trade for "important stuff" his people needed (i.e. things his "emperor" wanted). Flubub is proud that his expedition got further into dragonarmy territory than did any of the "two" previous groups sent, even though he is their only survivor. He feels that his tactical skills and leadership abilities make him a natural replacement for his emperor should any misfortune ever befall him.

He likes Kalack and is tagging along with him in order to learn how to read and write. With that knowledge, he reasons, it is only a short step for him to master magic and become a great sorceror–king. He wants to keep quiet because he still thinks he is on the expedition even though back home they have completely forgotten about it, and wants to return with a great deal of knowledge in order to lead his tribe to greatness. He believes that Kalack knows nothing of these plans, and Flubub thinks himself wily enough to fool him. He pretends to be no more intelligent than a typical member of his race. He often acts foolishly and asks a lot of questions, the answers to which he never seems to hear all the way through. Despite the fact that he is an intellectual paragon among his people, he has not reckoned with Kalack's keen mind. He is not aware that Kalack has heard him mumbling in his sleep about his "destiny," nor does he know that Kalack has seen him gesturing wildly, pretending to cast mighty magic.

Flubub Phlup
2nd level gully dwarf fighter

STR: 10
DEX: 13
CON: 8
INT: 10
WIS: 9
CHA: 7

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 1
Hit Points: 11
Alignment: Neutral
Languages: Aghar dwarf, hill dwarf, common
Age: 45
Height: 3'11"
Weight: 96 pounds
Hair/eyes: grimy deep brown or light brown (if cleaned)/deep brown
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, shortsword, club, sling
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Survival (10), hunting (8), swimming (10)
Magic Items: Unadorned dagger which gives as +9 AC bonus. Flubub does not know that but suspects that something is protecting him (probably the dead fish in his pocket).

Despite his personal dreams of glory, Flubub is very loyal to Kalack because he is the only person ever to show him kindness and accept him without judging him. Among his own people, Flubub was ostracized because of his intelligence. He is beginning to suspect that Kalack is even more intelligent than he is and may know even more interesting things than he does. The only thing that worries Flubub is Kalack's interest in magic: he is afraid that Kalack might want to become Lord High Emperor of the Aghar domains. Still, Kalack did rescue him, and Flubub has not forgotten that. He feels somewhat guilty for deceiving Kalack, and has considered inviting Kalack to be one of his advisors. This decision has been troubling him a great deal lately, and he is not quite sure what to do about it. He does not realize how much he has come to value Kalack's friendship and is likely to do anything to help him, even if it means that Kalack discovers his plans. Such an action may surprise him. ❑

The Time has come to look to...

DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™

Inside information on TSR's upcoming new Role-Playing Game

The Way It Was

The universe is full of role-playing game-based novels these days. Indeed, it seems impossible for any company to launch a new game line without releasing a few novels to set the stage for would-be dungeon masters.

Long ago, however, this was not the case. When Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman wrote the first DRAGONLANCE novel, they were breaking new ground. There were those who said that this venture would cost TSR its shirt and be a huge bomb. These skeptics, I'm glad to say, were wrong.

In the years since the publication of that first novel (way back in 1984), the DRAGONLANCE line has proven to be one of the most popular in the RPG industry. Without taking the time to count them, I'd say that there have been about a zillion* related products produced over the last decade. These have included novels, role-playing games, computer games, calendars, and more. Indeed, there is even talk of an animated DRAGONLANCE movie these days. Not bad for a product that was doomed to failure.

The most recent novel in the series (as of this writing) is *Dragons of Summer Flame*. This book details the events that conclude the War of the Lance and the Fourth Age (or Age of Despair).

* Sue Weinlein tells me that a zillion is roughly equal to 60 books and 40 game products, plus all that other stuff.

What is Soon to be...

One of the first questions that anyone familiar with role-playing games will ask is: What makes DRAGONLANCE: The Fifth Age different from other fantasy games? Well, quite a few things, actually.

Not Another AD&D World

I can hear the doubters out there already. Do we really need another AD&D game world? Especially when it's really just an old game world being reworked?

Well, I don't want to upset those doubters, but DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE is neither of those things.

First, FIFTH AGE isn't an AD&D campaign setting. In an effort to make the world of DRAGONLANCE more dramatic and give it the literary feel of the novels, the decision was made to produce a whole new role-playing game system. DRAGONLANCE isn't AD&D anymore, it's become a whole new game designed for people who love to play roles more than roll dice. I'll talk more about this a little later.

How about the idea that FIFTH AGE is just a slight reworking of the old DRAGONLANCE campaign setting? That's not the case either. The events that transpire in *Dragons of Summer Flame* have transformed the world of Krynn. To be sure, much has remained the same on Krynn and Ansalon, but there have been some sweeping changes that will make players and DMs alike scramble to fit the pieces of this new world together.

Roles vs. Rules

Perhaps the most important thing, is the fact that FIFTH AGE has been designed with an eye toward drama and role-playing, not rules and game mechanics. As such, it makes use of many techniques that will be new to even the most jaded role-players.

Examples of this philosophy will be found throughout the game. For the most part, however, they focus on the control that a player has over the actions of his character and the flow of the storyline.

To be sure, many role-playing games place a great deal of emphasis on the telling of stories and the importance of dramatic elements. For the most part, however, the game mechanics used in such systems don't do much to foster such play. Simply making a game "rules-light" doesn't make it better for role-playing. There still comes a time when the rules get in the way of drama and characterization.

While it isn't possible to eliminate the rules, steps have been taken to minimize their interference with play in the FIFTH AGE game. Many of the duties that traditionally fall on the shoulders of the referee have been designed so that the players will be handling them. This leaves the referee free to focus on the drama and pacing of the adventure, giving it a much more literary flavor.

The Hand of Fate

While many adventure games use dice or other random number generators to resolve the outcome of actions, FIFTH AGE employs an 81-card Resolution Deck. During the game, every player holds a hand of cards (lovingly called The Hand of Fate during our playtests). When the time comes for a player's hero to attempt some feat, he selects the card to use. Thus, a player may hold better

by William W. Connors

cards in his hand for use during critical junctures in the scenario.

Because of this selection process, the random aspects of play are greatly reduced. A player has far more control over the fate of his character in the FIFTH AGE game than he does in most other RPGs.

Freeform Systems

Various aspects of the game (such as movement, the passage of time, and magic use), which are usually highly regulated in adventure games, are dealt with in an abstract, freeform method. There is no game board, battle map, or other such limiting element. Thus, drama and adventure take the place of odds calculation and table reading.

The Campaign

Thirty years have passed since the end of *Dragons of Summer Flame* when the Chaos god was defeated and the pantheon of Krynn withdrew from the affairs of men. A great war, called the Dragon Purge, has been fought between the good and evil wyrms. The nature of magic has been changed beyond recognition by the elimination of the three moons and the withdrawal of the gods of magic. Even the passage of time is recorded differently, for this is the Fifth Age, the Age of Mortals.

Magic

Perhaps the most obvious example of the freeform philosophy will be found in the system used for spell casting. Players whose heroes are capable of employing magic are not tied to spell lists or other tables.

Everyone who uses magic is given a certain number of points with which to shape the mystical energies of the world, The exact effects to which these energies are put is entirely up to the player. If he wants to throw a fire ball at an enemy, he can do so. If he wishes to summon a bolt of lightning from the blue, he has but to snap his fingers. Of course, the more powerful the spell, the harder it is to cast. Magic in the Fifth Age is not as easy to wield as it was in earlier times.

There are two basic types of magic in the Fifth Age: sorcery and mysticism.

Sorcery

Sorcery is a primordial magic that infuses all of Krynn and dates back to the time of creation, predating the arrival of the gods of magic. Those who wield it are able to do great things, but will find that their powers are limited to affecting non-living matter only. The greatest of Krynn's sorcerers are the three members of the Last Conclave. Headed by the mysterious Master of the only remaining Tower of Sorcery, this order includes the mighty Palin and the somewhat ominous Shadow Sorcerer (about whom almost nothing is known).

Mysticism

This is the power of life and the radiant energies that sustain it. To master the mystical forces of the universe, one must master the power in one's own heart.

The mystical orders of the world are based out of the Citadel of Light, a great fortress built on the island of Schallsea. The head of these orders is the elderly, but highly revered Goldmoon, who cares for all of Krynn as a mother might for its only child.

Dragons

Few dragons have survived the Dragon Purge. There are probably no more than fifty dragons left on Ansalon; half of those are cloistered away in hidden sanctuaries. Those dragons that do remain, however, are titans of their kind. Even larger and more aggressive than the dragons of the last age, they dominate much of Ansalon.

Indeed, so powerful are these dreadful creatures that whole nations have fallen before them. Through the use of powers unheard of in ages past, they have spawned far-reaching changes in the geography and climate of the lands in which they dwell, much to the detriment of the humans and demihumans who lived there before them.

The Design Team

Well, that's just a taste of the world of Krynn during the Fifth Age. I think it's a pretty interesting place. Nearly as interesting, however, is the design team assigned to create the game products that detail it.

The leader of the team is Harold Johnson, one of the original crew that created the first DRAGONLANCE games and novels. Harold brings many years of gaming experience to the product, as well as an intimate familiarity with DRAGONLANCE line and its history.

Next, we have Sue Weinlein. After a few years of editorial work on novels in TSR's book department, Sue transferred to games, bringing a literary background which gives FIFTH AGE a depth of which few games can boast.

Third, there's Skip Williams. Known to most Network members for his years on the Newszine, Skip's *Sage Advice* column has been required reading for AD&D players since it first appeared in the pages of DRAGON® Magazine.

Fourth (don't worry, we're almost done), there's Steve Miller. He's one of TSR's new fish and combines a fresh viewpoint on the line with a desire to make his own mark on one of his favorite game worlds.

Lastly, there's me (William W. Connors). Fans of the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting will be familiar with my work on such products as *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts*, *Web of Illusions*, and the *Masque of the Red Death* campaign setting. Along with Sue, I was one of the original proponents of the FIFTH AGE concept.

There are others, of course, who help us along. From the guiding hand of James M. Ward (who mandated that we include bigger, badder dragons) to the graphic design of Dawn Murin (who shaped the look of the RAVENLOFT and PLANESCAPE™ lines), each of us brings something different to FIFTH AGE.

We hope the final product will be something that people can embrace as they did the original DRAGONLANCE saga. I look forward to finding out what people think of our work. ❑